


E. A. Brandebury





MOUNT LEBANON.

VOL. I.







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(LATE) PRINCE OF THE LEBANON

Saunders & Otley, 1853

Mount Lebanon

A TEN YEARS' RESIDENCE

FROM 1842 TO 1852

DESCRIBING THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGION
OF ITS INHABITANTS

WITH

A FULL & CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THE DRUSE RELIGION

AND CONTAINING

Historical Records of the Mountain Tribes

FROM

PERSONAL INTERCOURSE WITH THEIR CHIEFS AND OTHER AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

BY

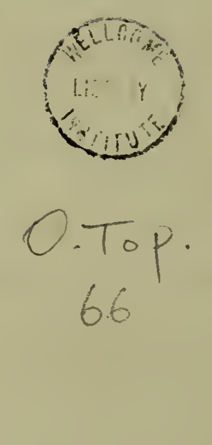
COLONEL CHURCHILL

STAFF OFFICER ON THE BRITISH EXPEDITION TO SYRIA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET
1853.


WELLCOME
LIBRARY
INSTITUTE

TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

&c. &c. &c.

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,

AS A SLIGHT TRIBUTE OF SINCERE REGARD,

BY HIS GRACE'S

FAITHFUL AND OBLIGED FRIEND,

CHARLES HENRY CHURCHILL.



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

The East has long ceased to be, for Europeans, a "*terra incognita.*" The martial spirit of Napoleon, the scientific ardour of Belzoni, the enterprising researches of Burckhardt, Kirby, Mangles, Pococke, Laborde, Walpole, and other travellers well known to the literary world by pleasing, intelligent, and instructive publications, conveying the results of their observations and experience, have all conspired to excite a powerful and still increasing interest in lands, which once could boast of wondrous thoughts and glorious achievements, but which, when the West became the great battle-ground of human progress and advancement, were gradually consigned to oblivion and neglect.

At the same time, the East is a wide and comprehensive word. To England, how much so! The genius of England which seems so peculiarly

fitted to lead and govern the populations of the East, has, by the happily-combined influence of arms, commerce, and legislation, established in that quarter of the globe, a dominion which no purely military conqueror could ever have consolidated, much less upheld and sustained.

The development of the capabilities and resources of that unparalleled empire in the East, over which England presides—and that without a rival or compeer—has thus become essentially necessary to her national prosperity, it may be to her national existence, and must ever possess imperative, though not exclusive claims upon her national feelings and sympathies.

I say, not exclusive, and advisedly; for the East, to an important portion of which I now invite public attention,—the East, whose shores are washed by the Mediterranean sea,—the East of rock-hewn cities and colossal tombs, of heavenly poesy and gigantic art, of Jacob's might and Ishmael's wandering power, of David's lyre and of Isaiah's strain, of Abraham's faith and of Immanuel's love,—where God's mysterious ways with man begun, and where in the fulness of time they

are to be accomplished,—this East, which may yet become the seat and centre of the Universal Reign!—it also has claims on England's watchful vigilance and sympathising care, and already invokes her guardian Ægis.

A general, and possibly not incorrect belief is now prevalent, that a revolution of hitherto unprecedented magnitude is closely impending over these interesting regions; one by which they will at length be made amenable to the vivifying impulses of social and political amelioration—one in fact, which will deliver them from the bonds of death unto life.

Whatever part England may take in the temporary complication of affairs which will probably ensue on that mighty consummation, which the timid dictates of diplomacy would defer, but which the urgent demands of humanity and civilization would fain accelerate, it must, for obvious reasons, be clear to every English mind, that if England's Oriental supremacy is to be upheld, Syria and Egypt must be made to fall more or less under her sway or influence.

Napoleon declared Acre to be the key to the

East, and most correctly did his military genius appreciate the importance of that land into which he vainly sought to enter, as a basis of operations against our Indian empire. But if the walls of Acre contained the germ of destinies so glorious to England's enemies — and who shall say the vision was chimerical?—how much more so Mount Lebanon, that great natural fortress which stands midway between the Eastern and the Western world!

I call upon my countrymen, therefore, to adopt this political doctrine, and nail it to the National colours:—That when Mount Lebanon ceases to be Turkish, it must either become English, or else form part of a new independent State, which, without the incentives to territorial aggrandizement, or the means of military aggression, shall yet be able to maintain its own honour and dignity, and more especially to promote the great object for which it will be called into existence, for which indeed, by its geographical position it will be so eminently qualified; that of creating, developing, and upholding a commercial intercourse in the East, which shall draw together and unite the

hitherto divergent races of mankind in the humanizing relations of fraternity and peace.

It is, indeed, the firm conviction that Syria must ere long attract a large share of public attention in England, which has induced me to publish the result of my studies and personal experience, in that part of it with which circumstances have rendered me particularly familiar, and whose past history as well as present state and condition I have honestly, though perhaps rashly, aspired to elucidate.

Were it my object to excite interest and afford amusement, by details of personal incident and adventure, or to lead captive the imagination, by highly-wrought descriptions of the various scenic beauties with which the Lebanon undoubtedly abounds, perhaps neither materials for the one, nor power for the other would have been wanting. But I felt, in the first place, that the general reader had often already been led along this flowery and attractive path, under the guidance of various modern tourists, whose seductive charms of composition it would have been hazardous, if not presumptuous in me to emulate.

And, in the next place, that, as the time is probably fast approaching when Syria, instead of being merely the land of dreamy and luxurious travel,—of exhilarating emotions, and fascinating though transient delights, will have to become one of sound practical legislation, of resuscitating institutions, of vigorous and comprehensive government; whatever might tend to throw a light on the present or antecedent existence of any portion of its population, would prove an acceptable addition to the general, though it must be confessed, meagre stock of information, which the British public as yet possesses regarding that highly important country.

A residence of some years in Mount Lebanon has naturally enabled me to examine the character, manners, and customs of those by whom I found myself surrounded. To their customs I conformed with a pliancy, and perhaps zeal, not often usual with Europeans, similarly situated. Their language once acquired, I soon mixed amongst them on the footing of easy and social intercourse. I endeavoured to gain the confidence and esteem of all ranks. With what success it is not for me to say.

Two subjects soon engrossed my attention,—the religion of the Druses, and the past history of the races which now occupy the mountain range of the Lebanon. In vain I tried to make the terms of extreme friendship and intimacy which existed between myself and the Druses, available for the purpose of informing myself on the first of these points. Sheiks, Ockals, peasants, alike baffled my inquiries, either by jocose evasions, or by direct negation. The main doctrines of the Druse religion, however, notwithstanding all the mystery with which its professors still endeavour to envelop it, are as patent as the day. Many of the Druses know this to be the case, but dare not give such publicity the sanction of their admission and avowal. The reasons for their caution and reserve are explained in the course of this work.

The Druse religion was first promulgated by its authors in the shape of Epistles or Tracts, which together make up what may be called the Druse compilation, or Sacred Writings. Several of these Tracts have, from time to time, escaped the jealous vigilance of the Ockals, and been purloined from the places in which they were deposited in their Holowés, or houses of religious meeting.

So much so, that most of the great public libraries in Europe have long possessed copies more or less complete of the Druse religious writings, presented by travellers, who had purchased them from native Christians in the Lebanon. Again, during the late civil wars between the Druses and Maronites, many of the Holowés were pillaged, and, in this manner also, several Tracts became scattered abroad.

Though procuring some of the latter, still I found myself sadly deficient in materials for drawing up a satisfactory account of the Druse religion; and yet I felt that there was a great deficiency on this score, in the knowledge which the British public had as yet obtained of that remarkable people; and one which, in any work pretending to give a history of Mount Lebanon, ought, if possible, to be supplied. I determined, therefore, on bringing to my aid a work of the late Baron Sylvestre de Sacy, entitled, "La Religion des Druses," and which that celebrated Oriental scholar compiled chiefly from Arabic manuscripts, contained in the Royal Library at Paris.

This, then, is my main authority in the account

I have given in my second volume of the Druse Religion; giving the substance of the most striking passages which he has quoted from the Druse collection, with as much conciseness as was consistent with lucidity, and interspersing them with such remarks and observations, as my own knowledge of the actual habits and proceedings of the Druses enabled me to supply. This joint authorship extends through the first seventeen chapters of the same volume. My observations on the Mohammedan sects, and my account of Hakem, is drawn from the same source.

If, in adopting such a course, I have necessarily diminished my claims to originality in this part of my work, I hope I may at least be credited with an humble and sincere desire of imparting information to the British public, on a subject respecting which, I am aware, much curiosity has existed, without having been, as yet, to my knowledge at least, in any way gratified.

With regard to the origin of the present inhabitants of Mount Lebanon, I found that with the exception of the Maronites who occupy the more northern ranges, and who are descendants of the

pagan tribes which existed there at the very remotest periods of Jewish history, the vast majority of the population are of Arab extraction.

The two great Maronite Houses of Shehaab and Bilemma, indeed, as well as the whole of the Druse feudal aristocracy, refer to their Arab ancestry with feelings of pride and self-complacency, as evidence of the antiquity and grandeur of their line. The correctness of these assertions, as well as the exact period at which the Arabs entered the Lebanon, is fully exhibited in manuscript records, still in the possession of a few noble Druse and Christian families in the Lebanon.

To some of these manuscripts, which allude to the proceedings of the Mountaineers during the middle ages, it has been my good fortune to have had access; and a further reference to "La Bibliothêque des Croisades," greatly assisted me in the treatment of this portion of my subject. But the principal document which attracted my attention, and on which I have chiefly relied for the latter part of my history of the Lebanon, is one which was drawn up some years ago, by a Maronite Emir of the House of Shehaab. It is called the

"Chronology of the Emir Heider Shehaab," and has been continued down to the present day, by another Maronite chronologist, Sheik Tanous Shidiak.

To dignify this performance with the title of History, would be absurd. It is, in fact, nothing more than a bare enumeration of events, strung together without the slightest attempt at historical disquisition, or political illustration. It remained for me to give this compilation such volume, style, and harmony, as might render it acceptable to my readers: a task by no means alluring, and, which only the hope, that I should be materially assisted in the undertaking, by my knowledge of the character, dispositions, and habits, of the great feudal aristocracy, whose proceedings it delineates, would have induced me to attempt.

The field of history to which I introduce the reader is new, and to those who wish to become acquainted with the general features and characteristics of the people of Mount Lebanon on the one hand, and the principles, policy, and conduct of the various Eastern despotisms, with which they have been brought in contact, on the other, it will not be without its use and interest.

The constant repetition of events so nearly similar in their form and complexion, the perpetual recurrence of actuating motives, so invariably the same in all the parties concerned, made it difficult for me to be correct and full, without being monotonous. However, I have endeavoured by a few biographical notices, and by various descriptions of some of the most stirring events which signalized the epoch of Turkish rule in the Lebanon, to give a colouring to the narrative, which I trust has tended to render it attractive.

Finally, if the account contained in this work, of one of the most interesting parts of Syria, shall prove in any degree instrumental in engaging the more serious attention of the British public towards a country, the superlative importance of which, as a medium of social and commercial intercourse between the European and Asiatic races, is as yet but faintly conceived, and which will only then be duly appreciated when it shall have been fairly tried and experienced; its object will be accomplished—its author rewarded.

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MOUNTAIN RANGE
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Long. E. of Greenwich
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La Marina
Gibel Turbull
Jibel Akkar
Ras Natour
Ras esh Shaka, Cape Madonna
Batroon
(Botrus)
JEBAIL
(Byblus)
Nahr el Ibrahim
(River Adonis)
Bay of Jouni
Nahr el Kelb (Dog River)
St. Georges
Bay
BEYROUT (BERYTUS)
Beyrout Point
Ras Sadeea
Ras el Jeddra
Ras em Mundoura
SIDON, SAIDA
TYRE, SOOR
M A R O N I T E S
D R U S E S
M E T U A L I S
Anti Lebanon
Ranges of High Hills
Baalbec
El Bekaa
Zahleh
Job Jenin
Rascheia
Hasbeya
Jordan
Banias
Kunneytreh
DAMASCUS
El Kessoue
Sasa
Jibel Arab
El Khudder
Nahr el Awali



MOUNT LEBANON.

INTRODUCTION.

Few spots in the East can vie in interest with Mount Lebanon. The sacred volume is replete with allusions to it. Sages, warriors, prophets, and kings, have made it the subject of their strains and the ground of their exploits.

After the devastating war by which the great military leader of Israel had vanquished the enemies which opposed his ingress into the promised land, a tacit compact seems to have been come to between the contending parties, that the original inhabitants should still occupy and cultivate the ground, on the condition of yielding tribute and the duties of allegiance to their invaders and conquerors. This league, so completely at variance

with the design and instructions, as we are told, of the Lord who led them out of Egypt, was immediately nullified by a Divine decree, which established, that the people with whom the Israelites had thus condescended to enter into terms of amity and friendship,—a people polluted by the worst and most revolting vices, and the grossest forms of idolatry,—should "be as thorns in their sides, and their gods become a snare unto them."* And into this snare too surely and swiftly did they fall.

Scarcely had a generation passed away after Joshua had been removed from amongst them, ere the Israelites "forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were around them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger."† In place of enjoying peace and tranquillity, their stubbornness and rebellion brought upon them misery and distraction.

Purchasing a precarious security by mutual intermarriages, the Israelites lost the prestige of conquest over the various races amongst whom

* Judges, ii. 3. † Judges, ii. 12.

they dwelt, while the nations as yet unsubdued by Joshua, amongst whom were the "Hivites, in their fastnesses of Mount Lebanon," stood before them to "prove them,"* in the attitude of menace and defiance.

It was from Mount Lebanon that Solomon procured the timber requisite for the building of the Temple. Having obtained the permission of Hiram, king of Tyre, whose sovereignty seems to have extended thither, and taken into his pay the superior workmen of Sidon, so renowned as hewers of timber, he "raised a levy of thirty thousand out of all Israel, and sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month, by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home, and Adoniram was over the levy."† When Sennacherib king of Assyria declared war against Hezekiah, his boast was, "With the multitude of my chariots I am come up the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof."‡

* Judges, iii. 1—3. † 1 Kings, v. 13, 14.
‡ 2 Kings, xix. 23.

To display his conquering standards on those far-famed heights, was to him a more glorious object of ambition than even the taking of Jerusalem itself; and how much he appreciated his success in this enterprise, may be seen to this very day in the undecaying inscriptions which he has left on the rocks near the river Lycus,—now called the Dog River, within a few hours of Beyrout,—when, in the full career of conquest, he was carrying his irresistible arms into Egypt and Ethiopia.

Though two thousand five hundred and sixty years have elapsed since that epoch, the figures of the satraps, and the arrow-headed characters of the Assyrian language, starting forth from the living granite in pristine freshness, seem to warrant the mighty monarch's aspiration and boast, that his name and exploits should be immortal. There can scarcely be a doubt that it was Sennacherib who ravaged and destroyed the waving forests of Lebanon. "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen," is the burst of Zechariah.* "Is it not yet a very little while," exclaims Isaiah,† "and Lebanon shall

* Zech. xi. 1, 2. † Isaiah, xxix. 17.

be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest."

Ezekiel, in portraying the Assyrian, summons not before him his battles and triumphs amongst the surrounding nations, his invincible armies with their wide-ranging and almost interminable marches; one simple but magnificent metaphor is sufficient, in the prophet's mind, to make his hero's apogæon. "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great

waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him."* In a strain of mournful eloquence does the prophet then proceed to describe the wrath of God overtaking the presumptuous monarch in his career, and by a singular and remarkable turn of rhetoric, makes the Lebanon, which had been destroyed by him, as it were, to mourn for him, and "all the trees of the field fainted for him."†

The cedars of Lebanon unquestionably, then, once extended over leagues and leagues of ground; nor can any other supposition be admitted when one reflects on the amazing fact, that 3600 overseers, and 80,000 strangers, were employed by Solomon to cut down timber within its boundaries.‡ The traveller now goes on to the Maronite village of Bisherry, and demands a guide. He ascends by a winding path from this romantic

* Ezek. xxxi. 3—9. † Ezek. xxxi. 15.
‡ 2 Chron. ii. 16—18.

retreat, and in an hour finds himself emerging on a *plateau*, offering to his view a pleasing enough variety of verdure and cultivation, but nowhere the slightest vestige of the long and dearly-cherished object of his pilgrimage: his heart misgives him—the guide has surely misled him: he feels inclined to retrace his steps; suddenly he finds himself on the verge of a small dell, surrounded by undulating mounds, and entering into its hallowed precincts, he stands under the shadow of the hoary, and it may be imperishable relics of a forest grandeur, which was once the glory and pride of the whole East, and which, even in their loneliness and desolation, defy a compeer. Though political divisions of territory have extended the name of the Lebanon to a sufficiently extensive mountain range, the real Lebanon is that which is embraced by the small province of Bisherry. This entire district was covered by the cedars. Ezekiel and Solomon, in unequivocal terms, describe the mighty and extensive forest of Lebanon as deriving its strength and beauty from the abundance of waters by which its roots were supplied.*

* Ezek. xxxi. 4—7; Song of Solomon, iv. 15.

On entering the district of Bisherry, one is amazed at its appearance. The hum of waters never ceases to salute the ear. Sources upon sources of the purest and most limpid and sparkling streams—one might almost say rivers—gush from the summit of the mountains around, and descend in innumerable rivulets, as from one grand and unfailing reservoir. The terraces which the hand of the peasant has reared for the preservation of the soil, and which he carries up in successive progression from the basis to the very top of the mountains, are so broad and capacious in many places, from the gentleness of the acclivity, as literally to assume the look and deserve the appellation of "fertile fields."

Nowhere is the mulberry tree seen growing in such beauty, grace, and luxuriance, while the harvests which here repay the peasant's labour—without the aid of art, without even the ordinary resources to which the agriculturist applies to give fertility to the soil, with merely taxing the teeming fecundity of Nature—may challenge comparison with the produce of the most luxuriant plains in Europe.

What must have been the majestic grandeur, the unparalleled beauty of the scene, when the cedar and the fir blended their massive and imposing foliage over these crystal fountains, while the whole atmosphere around stood impregnated with perennial fragrance!* Does the inspired prophet seek consolation for the present afflictions in the coming glories of Zion?—he thinks he has compassed the whole range of metaphor, and seized the fittest emblem of her triumphant and glorious felicity, when he exclaims, "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee."† Still "esteemed," as when it was a mighty forest, the venerable remains of the cedars occupy an extent of ground scarcely covering two acres. "The rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them."‡

The pilgrim perhaps seeks to carry away with him some withered branch or broken stump, as a revered and treasured memento of his devotion and enthusiasm: he is suddenly stopped by a half-stifled voice which whispers him, "These trees were planted by the hand of God himself: beware of sacrilege." The priest who officiates

* Hosea, xiv. 5, 6; and Song of Solomon, iv. 11.
† Isaiah, lx. 13. ‡ Isaiah, x. 19.

at the small chapel lately erected on the site, goes on to render his warning more impressive, by recounting instances where disease, and even death, has been known to overtake the rash depredator on this holy ground. The peasant looks on the spot with awe and superstition: he believes God was the planter, and that He is still the guardian of the sacred grove. The stranger comes to wonder, to admire, to contemplate. Whoever can recal to his mind what all around him once was, and with the unerring guide of the inspired volume in his hand, and by its aid, and relying on its contents, summon before him the mighty changes which have stamped these regions with a sublimity of interest peculiar to themselves, which indeed hardly any other on earth can afford—must feel oppressed for a while by a feeling of melancholy and humility. The spirit of true religion will here be refreshed and invigorated. The unknown future of the Lebanon was traced and promulgated when it stood in all its pride and glory. What was predicted has been fulfilled. Has not another futurity been traced and promulgated by the same breath of inspiration? Faith will rejoice, hope, and adore. Let infidelity tremble,

and bow its proud crest, abashed and humbled, in the dust.

Rich in classical as well as scriptural associations, nowhere can the eye embrace such scenes of absorbing interest, as those which burst upon the view from the heights of Lebanon. Ascend Mount Sannin, and from amidst its eternal snows survey the magnificent prospect which stretches itself out in all directions. Mountain on mountain and gorge upon gorge crowd upon the sight in a very chaos of romantic wildness, while the two immensities of sea and desert, on either side, unite their indefinite and indescribable beauties to the richness and splendour of the scene.

Down those rugged declivities, the myriads of Sennacherib, those heads already devoted to the sword of the destroying angel,* rushed down in tumultuous array, flushed with the pride of conquest, and fresh emerging from the furnace of destruction which their firebrands had kindled around them. Through that defile, the Grecian phalanx slowly wound its cumbrous way, laden with the spoils of Issus, and exulting in the promised

* Isaiah, xxxvii. 36.

spoils of Tyre. These coasts still bear the impress of the Legion's toil. The very rocks attest the genius of Imperial Rome.*

Through those passes, Godfrey, Bohemond, and Tancred, led on their deluded hosts—miserable victims of folly and superstition. There is Sidon and Tyre—the one, the birth-place of letters† and navigation—the other, the mother of commerce and Ocean's earliest queen. In the distant verge of yon horizon arose that mighty wave of force and fanaticism, which, after having deluged Asia, Africa, and half of Europe, and expended its brute force, is gradually being absorbed, leaving behind it, wherever its traces yet exist, the slime and scum of

* The following inscription, in tolerable preservation, may be seen on a rock near the Lycus, or Dog River—

IMPCAES MAVRELIVS
ANTONINVS FELIX
VCVS
PARTMAX PRIMX CERMMAL
..... PONTIFEXIMVS .....
MONTI FVSINMINENTIBVS
LICO PLVMENICAESL
SMAM
DEFIATA ....
PER ....
ANTONININAVM.

† Cadmus carried sixteen letters from Phœnicia into Greece 2533 A.M.—*Rollin. Anc. Hist.* vol. i. p. 84.

malignant corruption and fœtid decay—a moral pestilence—which if not, as once, the scourge, is still the shame and opprobrium of humanity and civilization.

Yonder azure mountains which blend so softly with the ethereal skies around them, enclose the scenes of His career, whose weapons were the Words of Peace; whose doctrines fell on the hearts of His followers like the gentle dews of Heaven, with ever fresh and invigorating influence, summoning them to patience, humility, and endurance, as the ensigns of their warfare and the basis of their triumphs; and who consigned to them the mission—sacred, and lasting as the world itself—of uniting together the great family of Mankind in one common bond of Faith, Charity, and Love.

CHAPTER I.

The approach to Syria from the sea, between Sidon and Tripoli, is one of the most striking that can be depicted. The magnificent range of the Lebanon which salutes the eye, inspires the spectator with astonishment and awe. Whatever may have been his previous conceptions, they are not only realized, but even surpassed, by the appearance of the noble and extensive panorama which gradually unfolds itself to his view. He burns with impatience to survey more closely a country which contains such varied and majestic scenery, while its claims upon his love and reverence acquire fresh warmth and energy, from the charms with which Nature seems to have invested it. For whether Christian, Mahommedan, or Jew, his mind has long dwelt in secret

on the land which is endeared to him by the most sacred and important of all human considerations, has early formed an ideal of those hallowed spots from whence spring the fountain of his religious hopes and convictions, and his heart involuntarily kindles with feelings of increased fervour and devotion, as he contemplates this splendid portal to the Temple and the Shrine.

The lofty chain of Mount Sannin, rising to an elevation of upwards of sixteen hundred fathoms, whether robed in snow or capped with clouds, or mingling its clear cold granite colouring with the deep-toned azure of a summer sky, excites alternate feelings of wonder and admiration by the sublimity of its proportions and the imposing effect of its massive grandeur. By degrees, the villages of the Maronites, receding in successive gradations from the sea-coast to the topmost acclivities over a range of nearly thirty miles, while the highest peaks are crowned with white and glittering convents, present the appearance of one vast suburban city.

But it is not until one penetrates into the midst of this busy population, that one can discover and

appreciate the persevering toil and assiduity with which they have conquered the obstacles, and called forth and developed the capacities of what must have once been an apparently barren and unproductive region. The predominant, and indeed universal strata of which these mountains are composed, is a calcareous limestone, the substance of which is porous at the base, but hard and marble-like in the central and upper ranges. Indeed, marble itself, of a very superior description of grain and colour, and capable of the finest polish, is to be found throughout their whole extent.

The Lebanon in this respect may be compared to a magnificent and exhaustless quarry. In the narrow plains which girt its basis, and where the accumulation of earth is greatest, these materials are reached by the process of digging and mining. From the instant, however, that the mountain elevation commences, and over the whole of the intermediate districts, blocks and layers of a quality like sonorous freestone lie scattered in chaotic confusion over the surface, gradually increasing in proximity and compactness, until, towards the summits, they become bedded and cemented toge-

ther into solid masses of rock, displaying in their conglomerations, all sorts of wild and fantastic shapes, and shooting upwards into pyramidical and castellated forms and developments. It is in the tertiary deposit which distinguishes the lower and midland portions of this huge Silurian exesion, that the appliances of art and industry have revealed and utilized the resources of Nature. For no sooner are these superficial masses of stone separated and displaced, than the soil with which they are interlarded, together with that (and it is no inconsiderable portion) which had lain concealed beneath them, falls naturally and easily into those substantial parapets, by which labour has here gradually scaled and subdued the most forbidding ascents.

In this manner, also, villages rapidly spring up; for the superfluity of stone which arises from the process of clearing out and fitting the mountain sides for cultivation, serves for the purpose of building. The same remarks hold good of that portion of the Lebanon which is occupied by the Druses, with this difference—that their actual numbers being far inferior to the Maronites, they

are not reduced, like the latter, to the necessity of taxing their ingenuity to make every nook and corner, however unpropitious and unfeasible, contribute to their sustenance and support. There are tracts amongst the gorges of the Kesrouan whose appearance fills the spectator with amazement. He wonders how it could have entered into the mind of man, to think of commencing the process of making such almost perpendicular steeps available for the purposes of agriculture and commerce. Precipices, which in their original state must have appeared scarcely practicable for goats, have nevertheless been pared down and arranged into terraces, with such artistic skill and niceness, as to assume amphitheatral symmetry and capaciousness, and in the summer months are resplendent with the luxuriant foliage of the mulberry, the fig, and the vine.

Hamlets and villages, likewise, are scattered here and there, and constructed in such a manner, as to seem hanging over and ready to slide down into the abyss below them, on the slightest commotion. Yet the winds blow, and the wintry torrents descend, but rarely does any catastrophe

occur; for such is the scantiness of the soil, that every house and even every terrace wall, from the bottom of the ravine to the top of the mountain, is firmly based upon the solid rock.

It may well be supposed that some very powerful and predominant principle must have existed, to have induced men to leave the extensive and fertile plains which exist a few miles into the interior, and settle in localities where the first and primary means of existence is absolutely wanting. For the corn which the Lebanon produces is immeasurably disproportionate to the wants of its inhabitants; and even that which exists, is, with a few rare exceptions, of the most meagre quality.

Indeed, its cultivation, in the sense that agriculturists accept the term, may be said to be wholly abandoned. The idea of manuring the soil is never so much as thought of, and the only means which has suggested itself of preventing the ground from being over-wrought, is that of alternate sowing of corn and barley, while fallowing is unknown. The whole population is dependent on foreign importations for its yearly supplies. The open grounds of Palestine, and the plains of the Bekaa and the

Houran, form the indispensable granaries for this demand. The valley of the Bekaa was indeed, until lately, an appendage of the Lebanon, and all its principal Emirs and Sheiks had farms there of considerable extent and profit.

The resumption of its lands by the Turkish government has reduced most of them to the greatest straits, and tended more than any other measure to deteriorate their social and political condition. Some years ago, a traveller alighting at one of their feudal abodes, would have met with every mark of a liberal, and even profuse hospitality. A numerous train of attendants, indicating the ease and affluence of its proprietor, might have been seen standing in compact array about the castle gates, giving an air of importance to their chiefs, and ready on the slightest sign to supply the wants and necessities of the welcome guest. The Meedan would have resounded to the neighing of horses, and been animated by the bustling movements of a busy and officious posse of grooms, and purveyors, making all the requisite preparations for the safe and commodious lodging of his animals, travelling suite, and equipage. In the

interior, he would have found accommodations, if not luxurious, at least amply sufficient to supply all the requirements necessary to comfort and repose.

At the present day, in many instances, the first object that salutes his eye, is a dilapidated ruin, the porch tenantless, and the Meedan a solitude. The Emir, either vegetating obscurely in some private tenement belonging to his vassals, or if at home, avoiding an interview. Should he at length appear, he will be seen accompanied by a solitary domestic, holding his pipe, and in an under tone giving orders to some passer-by, to forage amongst the villagers, for beds, mattrasses, and other articles necessary for the passing exigencies of the unexpected arrival.

Nature, and the influence of events, have combined to make Mount Lebanon what it has long been, and must always continue to be, the rampart and fortress of religious liberty in the East. Some of its inhabitants were amongst the earliest converts to the labours and preaching of the Apostle James. Though all traces of apostolic simplicity and evangelical truth have long been lost among the

Christians who now possess it, the Lebanon was ever a sure and ready resort for the fugitives of that denomination, who fled from before the great Mahomedan invasion; and at a later period, for those sectarians who were exposed to the fury and persecution of the dominant faith and doctrine of Constantinople. Here, if not free from molestation, they were at least enabled to show a bold and imposing front, and to foil the attacks of their adversaries. Even of late years, the Armenian Catholics, oppressed and aggrieved by the Turkish authorities, fled to the Lebanon, and found, amidst the rocky precipices of the Kesrouan, a sure and inviolable asylum.

Hither the great Arab tribes, in the year 821, impoverished by the extortion, and goaded by the domineering insolence of the ruler of Aleppo, directed their steps, and obtained that liberty and independence which they had in vain sought for elsewhere. Here, likewise, the Druses were, at an earlier period of their history, enabled to assume such an attitude of strength and defiance, as to compel their Mohammedan rulers to desist from all open attempts at reducing them to establish mosques,

and to practise the external rites and ceremonies of Islamism, in the mountain; and after having obliged them to accept, on their parts, a nominal adhesion to the Koran, on their own principles, and in the very limited form under which it actually exists, continue to enjoy, in the most perfect security, the open and unconstrained exercise of a religion which reduces Mahommedanism to an absolute nonentity.

Thus, the force of circumstances, and the strong necessity of living free, compelled man to turn his genius and exertions towards the cultivation of these mountains, and the emulgence of their latent resources. And of all the productions of which they are capable, certainly the one most suited to the climate, and the nature of the soil, has been selected to be the main object of culture, and to supply the principal article of commerce.

From time immemorial, the mulberry plant has been most assiduously cultivated by the inhabitants of the Lebanon. Partaking, in its wild state, of all the hardy properties of a forest tree, the stock of the Persian mulberry, which is grafted upon it, of a more capacious, more fibrous, and darker-

coloured leaf, immediately assumes a strong and vigorous temperament, and if assisted by the appliances of water and manure, presents, in a very short space of time, a most healthy and luxuriant development of foliage.

The great mass of the mulberry plantations are of this latter quality. Every rearer of silkworms, however, keeps a few trees of the wild mulberry in their native state, as their leaves being of a tenderer and more succulent quality, are better adapted for the nourriture of the worm in the first stages of its existence. The raw silk of the Lebanon used formerly to supply the demands of the manufacturers of Venice, Damascus, Egypt, and Morocco, and was greatly in vogue for the brilliancy of its colour, chiefly of a golden yellow, and the fineness and delicacy of its threads. Of late years the establishment of European manufactories at Beyrout and in the mountains, conducted by English and French agents, has given an increased expansion to the sale of this valuable commodity, and from the vast superiority of their reels over the native process of winding off the cocoons, silk is now produced and sent to London and Mar-

seilles, which may challenge comparison with any in the world.

Next to the mulberry, the vine is the most esteemed as a source of profit, and is universally cultivated. A piece of ground fresh broken up and planted, remunerates in four or five years, when the plant begins to produce an ample crop. Independent of the grape as a comestible, and to the peasant an invaluable one, supplying the place of more substantial fare when eaten with bread, the wine and treacle which are elicited from it form a no insignificant item of revenue.

The vine may frequently be seen planted alternately with the wild mulberry, on which it is made to hang in graceful festoons. In the tracts, however, which are specially set apart for its culture, it is allowed to spread over the ground without support of any kind. Both the vine and the fig, and the latter is extensively grown, require no further care after the first trouble and expense of terracing and arranging the earth for their reception, than a yearly pruning, which is effected in the month of March, and an occasional ploughing during the spring and summer months.

Tobacco may be seen in the grounds of every village, and every peasant grows as much as is necessary for his own use. In the districts of Djebail and the Koora, it is brought to the greatest perfection, from the large quantities of goat's manure which are to be obtained there, and with which the soil cannot be too thickly impregnated in order to give this plant, strength, odour and flavour. In the lower and middle regions of the Lebanon, are large groves of olive trees teeming with the greatest fecundity and producing the finest quality of oil; while in the more sheltered valleys, where water abounds, lemons, oranges, pomegranates, sugar canes, bananas, coffee, and every possible variety of European orchard fruit may be reared in the open air, and by the commonest attention be made to attain a richness and luxuriance not to be surpassed.

Nor is it less redundant in its vegetable productions. Melons, cucumbers, pine apples, everything in fact which requires the artificial aid of the hot-house in other lands, may here be matured in three or four months, by the mere effect of climate. Three successive crops of potatoes may

be obtained within the twelve months out of the same piece of ground. The rot, so common elsewhere to potatoes, is here unknown, though it has been generally cultivated for several years past. The kitchen pea will pod two months from its being sown, and may be reared both summer and winter.

To a lover of the spontaneous charms of nature, the spring of the Lebanon will afford an endless and diversified source of gratification and enjoyment.

Breathing the most balmy and genial atmosphere, he may rove these mountains the live-long day, amidst a perpetual succession of all those flowers which form the ornament and delight of European gardens. Tulips, lupins, anemones, sweet peas, mignionette, hyacinths, jonquils, and numerous medicinal herbs, growing wild in every direction, and filling the air with their fragrant exhalations. Indeed, it is more than probable, that the West is indebted to the Lebanon for many of its horticultural treasures; indigenous to her, but carefully purloined and transmitted to Europe, in those occasional periods of peace and refinement, which

not even the frantic passions of the Crusaders could entirely exclude from the course of human life, and which recalled the thoughts of the warrior and the pilgrim to the land of his birth and the hearth of his affections.

Intermingled with all these productions, which in some measure redeem the still unfavourable aspect of the land, when compared with its possible capabilities, exist extensive demesnes of the wild oak and fir; the former, being generally common ground for the pasturage of goats, or yielding food for cattle during the winter months, being much resorted to by the peasants for this purpose, who cut away whole loads and carry it to their houses, and also supplying the wood necessary for smelting furnaces; the latter, being divided and partitioned amongst numerous proprietors, and affording excellent timber for house and ship building.

In the upper parts of Djebail and Kesrouan, the wild oak districts assume the nature and appearance of forests, and are the unmolested ranges of tigers, hyenas, wolves, foxes, and jackals. Here, also, and throughout the high grounds between the Jibby and the Metten, and even in the latter

province itself, the mineral aspect of the mountains becomes strongly developed; though deficiency of science, and the utter want of enterprise, too well contribute to keep the valuable resources of this nature which the Lebanon undoubtedly contains, wrapped up and concealed in darkness and mystery.

A coal mine was opened near Kurneille by Ibrahim Pasha, which promised to be productive, but since his departure it has been abandoned. An earth, containing iron ore, is gathered in the neighbourhood of Akoora, and is occasionally carried to the smelting furnaces of the adjacent oak district, while the iron mine of Murjaba remains still at work and unexhausted. On reaching the most elevated parts of the Lebanon, the rocky appearance of its surface is relieved by large forests of the wild juniper, which are yearly put under requisition for the supply of pitch; the resin of these trees being converted into this article by the process of burning them in a kiln, with a reservoir at the bottom, into which the mucus gradually descends.

The ashes are highly prized by the silversmiths,

who prefer these to any other species of charcoal, for the solution of the precious metals. Pitch is in great demand amongst the Arabs, who besmear their camels with it all over, every spring, at the time they throw off their old coating of hair. It serves to keep their bodies fresh and cool, and effectually prevents the cutaneous eruptions to which these animals are subject. It may be used in a similar manner for goats; and a slight quantity thrown into the pools where they drink, stimulates their thirst, and makes their milk more copious.

Productions so various as those which have been above described, necessarily require a most propitious climate. And such is the climate of Mount Lebanon. In all the most elevated of its habitable parts, the thermometer, during the winter months, rarely falls to 30° Fahr., while in the heats of summer it stands at about 65° and 75° Fahr. In the middle portions, the winter is, generally speaking, so mild, that geraniums, dahlias, carnations, and every kind of vegetable, stand out in the open air without the slightest injury. Frost is almost unknown. There have been years when the snow has fallen to within an hour's

distance from the plains; but its duration in those parts never exceeds a day or two, and in the midland districts it rarely remains on the ground more than ten days. Such winters, however, are exceptional ; generally speaking, the winter of the lower and middle ranges of the Lebanon is like our English spring.

These are the parts which are well adapted for a continual residence, the cold and the heat being equally bearable; for in the midst of summer the thermometer is generally from 75° to 85° Fahr., while the coolness of the nights amply compensates for the effects of a casual day's sultriness. It is to the villages situated at this elevation, at about three, four, and five hours from Beyrout, that the Europeans retire, to avoid the oppressive temperature of the plains during the summer months. The harvest commences in the month of July, and is well over by the end of August. The hot weather lasts from the end of May to the end of October, during which time, with the exception of an occasional shower in the month of July, and a day or two's rain about the end of September, the sky is nearly cloudless. On the inundation of

the Nile, during the months of July and August, the south-westerly winds blow strong and continually, with most refreshing effects. Upon the cessation of these winds, the weather becomes sultry; but about the middle of the day, a slight breeze springs up from the south, and lasts till nearly sun-set.

Such is the general salubrity of the climate of the Lebanon, that malignant diseases are wholly unknown. The cholera morbus has more than once raged around it, carrying off thousands from Damascus, and depopulating, more or less, the towns on the sea-coast; but it has never been able to obtain a footing in the Lebanon, which has hitherto remained entirely free from this dreadful scourge. Fever and ague are the principal, and indeed only complaints by which its inhabitants seem to be ever affected; the former, brought on by imprudent exposure to the sun, the latter, by incautiously sitting out lightly clothed in the open air, either before the sun has had sufficient time to warm the atmosphere in the early morn, or after the chills of evening have begun to succeed the genial glow of sunset.

The peasants have no idea of these very obvious causes of their prevalent maladies, nor indeed would the nature of their avocations permit of their taking the precautions above mentioned. They carry the ague about them sometimes for years, and trust to chance and time to relieve them, for its attacks rarely endanger life.

Individuals in easy circumstances, and especially travellers, by simply paying attention to the above considerations, and perhaps, as a further precaution, wearing flannel, may easily avoid these harassing and troublesome drawbacks to the enjoyment of life, and will find in the Lebanon one of the finest and most delightful climates in the world.

Throughout the Druse Mountains, the waters are pure and abundant, much more so than in those inhabited by the Maronites. The entire district of the Kesrouan is without a spring, and even in Djebail and Batroon the sources are rare and brackish, a want which is precariously supplied by the formation of large tanks to receive the rains.

The condition of the working classes in the

Lebanon, is on the whole encouraging to labour. There are no paupers, unless exception be made of those who, singular as it may sound, make pauperism a trade. But it must be stated that this class is to be found among the Maronites alone.

There are two villages, Shenaneer and Murtaba, entirely colonized by professional mendicants. Living in their homes in comparative luxury, the men, at certain seasons in the year, assume the garb of beggars, and wander all over the country, but more particularly resorting to the towns, and solicit charity.

A Beyrout merchant once happened to alight at Murtaba, and was looking about for a night's lodging, when he was accosted by a respectable-looking and well dressed individual, who kindly invited him to his house.

The general appearance of the apartments into which he was ushered, and the prompt and well-trained attendance of the domestics, gave assurance of the ease, and even affluence of their proprietor; and the traveller congratulated himself on his good fortune, in having made so desirable an acquaintance.

At the close of the evening, the Maronite quietly asked his guest if he had not already recognised him, a question which naturally excited feelings of surprise and curiosity, and which were not quelled, until the traveller found, upon a minute examination of features, that his worthy host was the very identical mendicant to whom he had constantly been in the habit of giving a trifling relief, and whose greasy pallet he had often filled with the crusts and leavings of his kitchen.

The wealthy beggar, not in the least abashed, but rather glorying in his own voluntary exposure, asked his friend to step with him to an adjoining apartment, which on being opened, was found to contain nearly one hundred bales of the finest silk.

The Maronites excuse themselves for this singular and unwarrantable imposture on the public, on the score of religion, and declare they should not be putting the seal and confirmation to their faith, unless they in this manner followed the example of our Lord, who went about from place to place, depending for his means of existence on the voluntary contributions of the people.

The lands of the Lebanon are cultivated by the

peasants, on something like the Metayer system. Many of the peasants have properties of their own, and are independent, except so far as they are under the orders of their feudal chief. The vast majority, however, are merely tenants-at-will, but the terms of contract with their landlord, although various in different places, are highly advantageous to them.

The principal source of revenue throughout the mountains arising from the silk crop, the soil is divided into territorial divisions for the growth of the mulberry, and each division has a house built of stone, generally consisting of one room, fifteen yards long by eight broad, with two centre pillars to support the roof, for the accommodation of the tenant and his family. In this the silk-worm is reared and brought to maturity.

From thirty to forty load of leaves is considered an ample division for a tenant, and a certain portion of arable land, and a vineyard, are always attached. On a tenant presenting himself as an occupant, the number of loads of leaves is counted, and their value ascertained.

The leaves of mulberry trees, in good condition,

are worth 2*l.* the load. The tenant pays his landlord a fine of two, four, and even six shillings on the load, which is called paying a fourth. The vines and figs are in like manner valued, but never less than the full fourth of the value of these trees is paid, because their produce is more remunerative, proportionably, than that of the mulberry. The tenant now enters his house, which is rent-free, and which is always built and kept in repair at the sole expense of the landlord.

The complete culture of the division he has received now devolves on him, such as ploughing, manuring, watering, agricultural implements, rearing the silk-worm, making wine, raisins, treacle;—in fact, the working out the entire resources of the land in every respect;—when, in remuneration for his toil, and for the fourth of the value which he has paid, he receives one-half of the net produce of the whole property. The other half forms the landlord's rent.

The arable land is cultivated under one or other of the following conditions; either the landlord and tenant supply, in equal proportions, the quantity of seed necessary, and divide the produce between

them at the harvest, or the land is inspected by a valuator, who adjudges the peasant to give, yearly, to his landlord, a supply of corn equal to, or double the quantity requisite to sow it, according to the inferior or superior nature of the soil.

The valuator, in fixing this remuneration, takes into consideration the average nature of the seasons, and also, that the land is alternately sown with corn and barley; but then the peasant is obliged to furnish his landlord, with the yearly amount of corn so fixed, whether the harvest is good, bad, or indifferent.

When the harvest is abundant, he gains, for good land will yield six bushels of corn to one sown; when the harvest is bad, he has sometimes to procure and buy the share he has to give to his landlord, out of his own pocket. In some parts, the mulberry plantations are farmed out in gross to the peasants, who pay a fixed yearly sum for them, and take the whole crop of silk to themselves.

On a tenant leaving, or being turned out, his division is valued, when he receives back from his landlord the fine, or value of the fourth, at the rate which he paid on taking possession; and, as a matter of course, if he has been industrious, and the

property has thriven under his care and superintendence, this value will have increased, and his gain be proportionably greater.

For this reason, judicious landlords prefer getting tenants who will pay a high rate of fourth, in order to make them more interested in the improvement of the property. An active and laborious peasant, on his part again, is too glad to pay five shillings rather than two shillings on the load, especially on new ground, because he knows that in a few years the property in his hands will have so improved, that the fourth will amount to a sum that few peasants can pay; and he acquires, consequently, a feeling of greater security as to his possession, from the diminished chances of competition.

The terrace walls which support every kind of produce in the Lebanon, frequently require pulling down and repairing; a process, also, which is very beneficial to the trees, by affording an opportunity for working about the roots, and clearing them of destructive weeds, &c. The expense, on such occasions, is divided equally between the landlord and the tenant.

If new land is to be broken up, and brought into cultivation, the peasant pays a fourth of the price of labour, and the landlord three-fourths. The main source of income to the peasants is the silk crop. A division of forty loads of leaves will yield to the latter, on an average, about 5*l*., and the produce of his vineyard and arable land about as much again, making their annual income 10*l*. To increase his means of living, the peasant labours as a working man in the spring time, when improvements are being carried on by the neighbouring landed proprietors. The price of labour is eight pence a day. His wife gains a little by spinning. On the whole, a peasant in the Lebanon manages to sustain himself and a moderate family on 1*l*. 10*s*. a-month, or about a shilling a-day. Their food is bread and olives, onions, boiled grits, with oil, raisins, figs, &c., and lebban, or butter-milk, the produce of his cows, of which he usually keeps two or three, varying in value from 2*l*. to 5*l*. each. At Christmas and Easter, the villagers kill a cow, on which occasions they have the privilege of eating meat.

About the end of April the peasants are all busy

on their own divisions. The mulberry terraces and vineyards have to be thoroughly ploughed and weeded, while the women anxiously attend to the operation of smoking the seed of the silk-worm, which takes about fifteen or twenty days to hatch.

The men cut down the branches of the mulberry pretty close to the stem, and carry them home to the women, who immediately strip the leaves, and spread them over the worms, who are laid out on round dried cakes made of cow manure, about a foot and a half in diameter, and placed, in successive stages from the ground to the roof, all round the room; every six hours the leaves have to be renewed, and as the worm arrives to maturity, even oftener, for they eat most rapaciously.

The rearing of the silk-worm, in fact, is a process very fatiguing both to men and women; to the former, from the unceasing operation of preparing and carrying the loads of leaves, sometimes from a considerable distance, and up and down the steepest acclivities; to the latter, from the sleepless and untiring vigilance with which they are obliged to attend to the feeding and placing of the grub, through the various stages of its existence. At

the end of fifty days, it begins to form the cocoon, mounting for that purpose into the fern and wild oak branches which are placed to receive them. In about a week more, the worm has entered into its chrysalis state, when the cocoons are all removed and sorted. An agent, on the part of the landlord, now attends, when the cocoons are equally divided between him and his tenants, should they be destined for the European manufactories; or, in case of his preferring to weave in the Arabic manner, the division of the produce takes place after the silk has been entirely finished and collected.

A sirocco wind is very injurious to the worms, and in years when this is more than usually prevalent, the silk crop is a partial failure. The peasantry, in such a case, are reduced to the ruinous necessity of borrowing, at a most usurious rate, from the money-lenders, who unscrupulously exact twenty, and even thirty per cent. Most of them, in fact, are more or less in debt, and a great part of the gains of even a good year goes to paying off a portion of their liabilities.

The laborious operation of getting in the harvest now taxes all their energies. The crops are cut

down with the sickle, and the men carry load after load on their backs, under a broiling sun, to the threshing-floor. Few Europeans could stand the toil and severity of this labour.

The vineyards and fig plantations next demand their care and attention, for the preparation of dried figs and raisins, and for the functions of the wine-press. To make wine, the grapes are thrown in bunches into circular basins of masonry, the bottoms of which are on an inclined plane, and trampled out by the feet, the juice running off into reservoirs fitted to receive it. After a few days exposure to the sun, the liquor is drained off and put into barrels. The mash of grapes which remains in the basin is now subjected to a second treading, and the remaining juice turned off into another reservoir, where it undergoes the process of inspissation, by the addition of a whitish earth, called howarra, which, after a certain time, gradually sinks to the bottom, leaving a very fine and superior quality of treacle.

The wine of the Lebanon has ever been famous. It was much sought after by the Roman epicures, and, indeed, some of its wines to this day can

hardly be surpassed, for richness of colour and delicacy of flavour. Nor is this surprising, when it is considered that there are upwards of thirty distinct species of grapes flourishing in its mountains. The rocky nature of the soil, and the extreme purity of the air, no doubt tend to bring this delicious fruit to a perfection not attainable even in the south of Europe. Independent of the constant toil required by these employments, the mulberry grounds have to be ploughed at least three times during the summer months, and to be watered as often, where there are copious springs.

Towards the end of September and the beginning of October, the peasants have a slight respite from their labours, previous to the sowing season, which begins in November. This is the period of the year they generally appropriate to the celebration of marriages.

The same rules hold good amongst them as amongst the nobility, with regard to the choice of brides. No young man can marry out of the immediate range of his relations, so long as there are any single girls in the family; and a deviation from this rule is so fiercely resented, that it is

scarcely ever heard of. On the other hand, should a young girl dare to fix her affections on any young man not her cousin, the whole of her male relations rise up in arms, and after having made for her what they consider a fit and appropriate choice from amongst themselves, if argument and persuasion fail in bringing her to a sense of her impropriety, bring her to the altar by force. Such an occurrence to be sure is rare, but the exception proves the rule.

The consequence of this custom is, that there are families of one name in the Lebanon so numerous as to amount to clans, and who boast of from 100 to 150, and even 200 men bearing arms, which is a source of immense pride and gratification, and confers influence and importance. A few days before the marriage takes place, the peasant takes a propitiatory present of fowls, coffee, or sugar, to his landlord or feudal chief, and asks permission to perform the ceremony. A week is spent in rejoicings at his own home by the bridegroom, who all this time wears a pelisse of honour sent him by his landlord; by the bride, in preparations for her nuptials. On the day fixed,

usually on a Sunday, the bridegroom's relations come for the bride, when all her connexions make presents, varying from one to five shillings each, which are collected in a purse and given to the bride before she leaves the paternal roof. She takes her farewell by kissing the hands of all the male members of her family in succession.

The procession is now formed, and moves on at the slowest pace possible; the bride walking or riding, according to circumstances, closely veiled. A halt is made every five minutes, when the party sing songs accompanied by music, while some perform the sword dance. An hour is sometimes taken up in traversing a hundred yards. This uncommonly tedious rate of advancing is intended to indicate, that the bride is in no extraordinary haste to reach her future husband, and is a part of that characteristic reserve and modesty, whether real or fictitious, which distinguishes the sex on all such occasions in the East.

If the party has to go through a village on their route, the bride keeps her hand to her head, which is bashfully held down all the time occupied in passing through; thus respectfully saluting the

inhabitants, who, on their parts, sprinkle her with corn and raisins. On reaching her future home, the bride flings a pomegranate amongst the party, which is greedily snapped up and partitioned by the young men, and is supposed to give the marriage infection. As she crosses the threshold, she takes out of her bosom a piece of yeast, which she has brought from her father's house, and sticks it firmly on the door-post; signifying thereby her resolution to cleave closely to her husband; the latter, at the same moment, standing on the roof, exactly above the door, with a drawn sword over her head, emblematical of the absolute sway which he is to hold over her throughout life.

As soon as the first rains have fallen, in the month of November, the peasants are all at work again in the sowing of their crops. Those inhabiting the villages in the neighbourhood of the valley of the Bekaa and the plains of Baalbec, generally find occupation on the government lands of those districts. Each takes his pair of oxen with him, sows as much land as his animals can turn up, pays a sum of five pounds to the public treasury, and at the harvest takes two-thirds of the produce.

Ideas obtain, amongst the people of the Lebanon, with regard to the influence of the moon upon certain operations, which to a stranger appear singular and absurd, but which they affirm to be grounded upon trial and experience. They divide the progress of the moon, in its successive stages, into propitious and unpropitious days.

The first five days of the new moon are propitious, the next five unpropitious; four the one, four the other, three the one, three the other, two the one, two the other; thus completing the twenty-eight days. Nothing will induce a peasant to sow any vegetable productions, except on the propitious days, which he watches and calculates with the greatest care; and yet, in sowing corn and barley, the distinction is never attended to.

The moon in its third and fourth quarter is considered especially propitious to taking up the produce of the garden, to cutting down timber, and even to roofing houses. The beams of a house, it is asserted, which have been cut down in the first and second quarter, rot and decay much sooner than those which have been cut down during the third and fourth quarter.

Some of their religious superstitions are even more ridiculous. They stand more in awe of Elias,* than of God himself. There is a church at Unt-Elias, near the Dog River, dedicated to that prophet. A man will cheat and lie with the most persevering audacity, until challenged to swear to the truth of his statement on the altar of Mar Elias. This test is decisive. He trembles at the very thought of undergoing an ordeal which will expose his treachery and wickedness to certain and immediate punishment; for the fate of Ananias, it is firmly believed, will instantaneously attend every one who dares to lie to the prophet.

Occasionally a report is raised, that a fountain of water has burst forth in a certain locality, possessing miraculous qualities of healing. Hundreds of the afflicted will repair to the spot, whether men, women, or children, in confident expectation of supernatural relief. After days spent in washing and cleansing, the assemblage breaks up, pretty much in the same condition as when they arrived; some pocketing their delusion in sullen silence, others trying to protect themselves from ridicule

* The Elijah of the Old Testament.

by asserting loudly the efficacy of the waters, and unscrupulously quoting instances of cures effected before their eyes; while the priest, who has been present all the while, to encourage the faith of the pilgrims, and to receive their anxious confessions, walks off with a very respectable booty.

In the chapel of the convent of St. George, near Heittat, there is a picture of that warrior, with a little cup below it, into which the perspiration from the canvass is said gradually to distil. The Greek Christians greedily purchase this inestimable ichor, at any price which the officiating priest may demand, for its medicinal properties.

The blind superstitions of the Maronites even exceed these instances of folly and credulity, and are far too numerous to be quoted. But to say that the Christians of the Lebanon believe in the most rhapsodical stories about the marvellous interference of the whole company of saints in worldly affairs; that they burn lamps night and day, and offer up incense before their pictures, both in the public churches and in their private habitations; that they sacrifice an unlimited quantity of their hard-wrought earnings in votive and propi-

tiatory presents and offerings to the various chapels and convents which the saints are supposed more especially to patronize; that they are, in fact, the unresisting dupes of priests, who are themselves dupes to the system of Christio-Paganism, which prevails over the mountain; is but to say in other words that they are still under the yoke of a system of fraud and deception, which as widely estranges them from the true consolations of the religion which they profess, as it robs Christianity itself of that moral influence which the sublime simplicity, and the noble and elevating tendency of her doctrine, if fairly put forth in all their heavenly purity, could not fail of commanding, even amongst populations to whom the Cross is still "a stumbling-block," and "its preaching foolishness."

Till within the last few years the feudal system which has existed so long in the Lebanon pressed on the peasants with peculiar severity. On the slightest pretences, horsemen were quartered upon them, and not taken off until they had paid whatever sum it pleased their chiefs to exact. The slightest resistance was immediately punished by

summary corporal punishment. Indeed, the Emirs and Sheiks looked upon this power of fining, as a considerable source of revenue. Under the despotic rule of the late Emir Bechir, the exactions on the people were so repeated, as more than once to raise them into rebellion, and they obtained the reputation of being restless and insubordinate.

How far this is from being the real character of the mountaineers, is evident from their general conduct since the establishment of the more humane regime, under the auspices of the European powers, ten years ago. It may be fairly asserted that there is no State in Europe, where crimes are so rare in comparison with the population as in the Lebanon at the present day, and this, too, at a period when the principle of repression, as exercised by the authorities, is by no means such as to intimidate evil-doers.

Such is the leniency, not to say inefficiency of the government, both in the provinces of the Christians and the Druses, that offences of the gravest nature have often escaped without punishment; yet, notwithstanding this known and proved laxity on the part of the executive, the situation of the

country is on the whole tranquil and peaceable*—a condition which must be wholly attributed to the naturally good and quiet dispositions of the people.

At the same time, it cannot be said that they are wanting in feelings of pride and self-respect. Long accustomed to approach their superiors with the most abject expressions and tokens of submission—so much so, that a casual spectator would be led into the belief that they were the most abject slaves in the world—there are limits at which this extreme subserviency suddenly assumes the air of firm and dogged resistance; and an encroachment on their rights is met with a determination and a spirit of independence, which unequivocally indicate that the metal of freemen is lurking within their breasts.

* These observations were written before the recent demand for conscripts from the Druses, which has thrown the Lebanon into such a state of confusion and insecurity.

CHAPTER II.

Mount Lebanon, or the White Mountain, is strictly speaking, as has been already observed, that part of the great range extending from Egypt to the Taurus, which embraces the district of Bisherry. Modern political divisions have, however, extended this appellation to a wider tract of country.

In the north, this tract is bounded by Djebel-Turbul, above Tripoli; to the south, by Djebel-Reehan, above Sidon; the Mediterranean limits it on the west; and the valley of the Bekaa, or Cœlo-Syria, on the east. It is about one hundred miles in length, and from twenty-five to thirty miles in breadth. Its population, by the latest census, may be computed in round numbers at four hundred thousand.

By the Mohammedans it is revered as one of the five holy mountains. From its quarries, stones were taken to build the Haram at Mecca. The Christians glory in it as the land of the prophets and saints, and the scene of the Saviour's labours, suffering, and triumph. Under the Turkish government, it has lately been divided into twenty-one districts, which are as follows. As each of these divisions is under the government of a feudal chief, it will be as well to give the names of the feudal families, in conjunction with the names of the districts over which they rule.

El Zowya, above Tripoli, between the highest reach of the mountains and the sea, eight miles north of the river Abou-Ali. This district contains nothing peculiarly worthy of notice. Its population, amounting to nearly five thousand, is almost exclusively comprised of Maronites, and is under the House of Daher, an ancient and respectable Maronite family.

Jibby Bisherry, occupied by nearly 50,000 Maronites, under the House of Kerram. This is the stronghold of the Maronites. Notwithstanding all the vicissitudes and changes to which they have

been exposed during upwards of 1500 years, these fastnesses have ever been their own. Hardy, resolute, and wonderfully capable of enduring fatigue, these sturdy Highlanders scarcely ever emerge from their native mountains. Totally indifferent to, and indeed ignorant of the political intrigues which at times agitate their compatriots in the lowlands of the Lebanon, they pursue their vocations, the tillage of the land, and the culture of silk, with simple and persevering industry.

Towards their Sheiks they maintain a respectful but not a demeaning behaviour. There is a haughtiness in their looks which sufficiently betokens the spirit within, and which instinctively warns the passer by that he is amongst a race of freemen. The singular fertility of this district has already been alluded to. Amongst its most remarkable spots, is the village of Ehden, situated at about three hours north west of the Cedars. With its waving chestnut trees, and its pure and abundant springs, it affords a most attractive retreat from the heats of summer. Two years ago, the American missionaries residing at Tripoli, proposed to themselves to pass a few months there. A house

sufficiently commodious having been procured, they proceeded with their families to take possession of their new residence. They arrived, and alighted in safety.

The mules in due time followed, and unloaded. The shades of evening were fast closing in, when all of a sudden the tocsin was sounded, the village bells pealed incessantly, the peasants gathered tumultuously together, arming, sounding the war-cry, rushing to and fro like the inhabitants of a town besieged. The priests were seen hurrying here and there with crucifix in hand, as if leading on to an imaginary assault. The Americans wondered what on earth had happened, and essayed to go out and make inquiries.

In the twinkling of an eye they found themselves thrust back into their house, the door blockaded, the roof scaled, the windows smashed in, while the most awful imprecations filled the air. Fruitlessly they endeavoured to parley, to remonstrate—all in vain. "No Bible men here" was the universal cry. "Not an hour in the village; away with you; this is no place for heretics!" "But let us pass the night, and early on the morn-

ing we will be off," was the very moderate and humble demand of the affrighted missionaries.

An appeal to the rocks would have been as reasonable. The priests would hear of no terms, no delay. The Americans had placed before them the simple alternative of leaving the place on the instant, or having the house burnt about their ears. The firebrands were already lighted, the incendiaries were standing by, only waiting for the signal. Under such circumstances, to hesitate would have been madness. In the dead of the night, amidst the wildest confusion, surrounded by a furious mob, by the lurid gleam of torches, the missionaries and their families took their departure from Ehden, and descended again into the plains.

Such an outrage could not of course be allowed to pass by unpunished—representations were made to the Turkish government, by the American ambassador, upon the subject, and a firman was promptly procured, giving the required satisfaction. It was difficult, however, to persuade the mountaineers that they were under the Sultan's jurisdiction, in such matters as these. " The Pa-

triarch is our Sultan," was the haughty reply to the summons of their local authorities, demanding compensation for the losses incurred by the missionaries in their midnight flight. And, indeed, in this expression may be seen the essence of the Maronite religion.

In the eyes of the Maronites, every authority, civil or otherwise, is merged and absorbed in the authority of the priest; and with lynx-eyed vigilance do their priests and bishops in the present day, as indeed of yore, watch every movement, every tendency which may menace their long-established dominion.

Another remarkable place in the Jibby Bisherry is the convent of Kanobin, till lately the summer residence of the Maronite Patriarchs. Mostly hewn out of the solid rock, in the frightful gorge of the river Kadisha, the beams of the sun scarcely reach it. Founded, according to some, by the Emperor Theodosius, and endowed by Sultan Saladin, in return for the hospitality he received from the monks, when passing the spot in disguise, it is a site which would naturally present itself as a stronghold against persecution. And such,

indeed, was the cause of its being made the patriarchal residence.

In the year 1439, the Maronite Patriarch was summoned by Pope Eugenius X. to attend the general council at Florence. Not being able to attend, in consequence of age and debility, he delegated his duties to a Franciscan friar. The suspicions of the governor of Tripoli were aroused. It became rumoured abroad, that this assembly of the spiritual heads of Christendom was for the purpose of organizing and setting afoot a new crusade. The friar, on his return, was seized and thrown into prison.

The Maronites, however, partly by bribes, and partly by entreaties, succeeded in obtaining his release. It proved but a temporary respite. Again the jealousies of the governor were awakened, and he endeavoured to recover his prey, in the hopes of extorting by torture some important confessions. The friar, timely warned, fled; the storm this time fell on the Patriarch himself, who found himself suddenly surrounded and besieged in the convent of Mafook, in Djebail. With scarcely time to summon a single attendant, he

opportunely made his escape, and never stopped till he found himself safely lodged at Kanobin. The troops of the governor displayed no great zeal to follow their anticipated prisoner into so uninviting a retreat; and from that day forth, the Maronite Patriarchs made this spot the place of their temporary escape from the heats of the plains. But the convent of Kanobin has an interest attached to it of another and much more painful nature. It was within its gloomy walls that the unfortunate Assaad Shidiak fell a victim to his constancy to the truth as it is in Jesus.

Born of a respectable family in the vicinity of Beyrout, he had been led, by the accidental falling of a Bible into his hand, to compare the doctrines of the Gospel, with the creed and belief in which he had been brought up. He prayed, he reflected, he judged for himself. Patience and investigation, brought conviction. With a pardonable, though not a discreet zeal, he would fain impart his convictions to others. In every circle or meeting, on all occasions, he loudly denounced the errors and superstitions of his sect; inviting his hearers to draw from the same source as himself. Such a

phenomenon was a rarity in the Maronite world. His own brothers entreated, cajoled, threatened. Priests were sent to warn and reclaim. All to no purpose. The new proselyte still felt it his duty to proselytize others.

At length his conduct was brought to the notice of the Patriarch, by whom he was sent for, to be argued with! Unreluctant, nay rejoicing in the occasion, Assaad proceeded to the convent of Kanobin. Meeting at first with a courteous enough reception, due, indeed, to the respectability of his family, he and the Patriarch had several controversial meetings, without, however, being attended with such results as the latter would have wished. In vain the Patriarch quoted tradition, and the authority of the fathers. Assaad Shidiak took his stand on the Bible. This was his impregnable position. Chagrined by failure, and roused into resentment, the Patriarch resolved to try other and more stringent measures for bringing back the recusant within the pale of orthodoxy.

The room where he had been treated as a guest, was exchanged for a dark and dismal vault, where he was treated as a prisoner. The viands with

which he had been hitherto served from his host's own table, were replaced by a crust of bread and a jug of water. Weeks thus rolled on, and no one cared to ask after the condition of the unfortunate inmate of Kanobin. He had been silenced. That was enough. But one night, one dark and tempestuous night, he contrived to make his escape.

After scrambling over rocks and precipices, and tearing his flesh to pieces, he found himself in a wide forest, not knowing which way to proceed. At length, he met a goatherd, who, surprised at his garb and demeanour, asked him from whence he came. He replied, in the simplicity of his heart, that he had been so fortunate as to make his escape from the Patriarch's prison at Kanobin. The goatherd immediately arrested him, and took him back. Precautions were redoubled. Privations were aggravated. Persecution assumed its hideous garb. Deprived of light, scarcely allowed sustenance, chained as a lunatic, the grave delayed not long to demand its victim, while Heaven received into its bosom the spirit of the Saint and the Martyr.

Amongst the most remarkable, as it is the principal convent of the Maronites, is that of Koshaya, situated in this district.

Built at the extremity of a deep gorge, surrounded on all sides by wild and frightful precipices, towering above and hanging over it, a large part of it, like that of Kanobin, is cut out of the rock. The chapel is a subterraneous cave.

The rest of the edifice is built with the most solid masonry, and shooting up abruptly from, and in a continuous line with the rock on which it stands, looks down fortress-like on the deep ravine which lies at its feet. The industry of the monks, however, has contrived to evoke the gentler charms of nature out of the stern and savage materials by which they are surrounded.

The mulberry, the vine, and every species of vegetable production, flourish luxuriantly in the terrace gardens which cluster round the convent walls. A plentiful rivulet, flowing at the bottom of the ravine, is raised by artificial means to supply the purposes of irrigation. The whole affording a pleasing and almost necessary relief to the mind, from the sensation of awe and horror with which one approaches this grisly abode.

The resident monks, amounting to upwards of three hundred, are of the order of St. Anthony, and

are supported, as convents in general are, partly by the produce and revenues of land, exclusively belonging to them, partly by subscriptions. This convent has, however, one extensive source of revenue, well worthy of notice, and which probably is worth all the others put together. The productions of nature depend on the seasons; charity is uncertain and capricious; but man, the slave of ignorance and superstition, is a very mine of gold.

Koshaya is the favourite seat of St. Anthony himself. Having, while on earth, very successfully and triumphantly resisted a most determined attempt of the devil to take possession of himself; here by the cogency and power of an immaterial presence and ascendency, he mercifully offers to drive the devil out of others. Endless is the flow of pilgrims who annually resort hither, some to implore the saint's kind offices, others merely to pay their tribute and respects. On arriving, they are shown into a large apartment, hewn out of the rock, at the side of the road, a few yards in advance of the convent.

The monks whose duty it is to attend on strangers, presently appear, and perform everything

in their power to do the honours of the place. Refreshments, victuals, beds if required, are at hand. The wearied travellers momentarily forget their fatigues. The conversation naturally turns on the topic which absorbs their minds. The monks improve the favourable occasion, and introduce accounts of various miracles which have been performed on persons whose madness had been deemed incurable; till at length, having wound up the wonder and expectation of their auditors to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, they abruptly demand if any one is disposed to try on the iron lock!

This is nothing more or less than an iron dog collar, which is placed on the neck, and fastened together by a slip noose. St. Anthony is miraculously to undo this noose, while his votary is asleep. Should the sleep be restless, as is generally the case after much bodily and mental excitement, the lock is certainly found unfastened in the morning, for a very slight motion of the head and shoulders is sufficient to accomplish this object. The patient is then congratulated on having received so unequivocal a mark of the saint's notice and approval.

Should the lock be found unopened in the morning, as is also sometimes the case, the sleep having been profound, he is told that the failure is owing to his want of faith. This however is a mere passe-temps. The more serious affair is the treatment of those who are brought to be cured of madness. Whether he arrives in a state of idiotcy or as a raving maniac, the patient is no sooner handed over by his friends or keepers into the hands of the monks, than he is thrust headlong into a wide, damp, dismal subterraneous cave, extending several yards under the rocks.

There, with a heavy and ponderous iron chain round his neck, pinioned down to within a span's breadth of the wall, he is left in utter darkness, to await the supposed interview of St. Anthony. In a few weeks he is sometimes brought out to the light and air, as quiet as a lamb, and in perfect possession of all his senses, much to the pleasure and satisfaction of his friends and relations. Cold, solitude, and starvation, the three very unspiritual agents employed by the saint, have done wonders.

But *their* instrumentality is never for a moment thought of, much less acknowledged. The patient

was sent to be cured miraculously, and nothing short of belief in a miracle can satisfy the cravings of minds already predisposed, by rumour and credulity, to anticipate a supernatural interposition. Every religion and sect in the country sends forth its votaries and patients to this far-famed spot. It is a national superstition.

El Koora extends from Mesalaha to Jibby Bisherry, and between the river Assafoor and the river Jose. It is divided into the Upper and Lower Koora. At a village in the latter, called Ras en Haash, situated on a wide plateau about two hours from Batroon, may be seen the humble descendants of the great Saladin, to this day styled the Emirs of the House of Ayoob.

Unconscious of the glory of their great ancestor, they merely know that they are of noble descent, and though gaining their bread by the labour of their hands, and performing the commonest offices of the serf and the peasant, they haughtily refuse to return any salutation which does not give them their proper rank and appellation.

The plain of the village of Amyoon, in the Upper Koora, is remarkable as the site of a great

and decisive battle, fought between the troops of the Emperor Justinian II. and the Maronites, in the year 694, in which the latter were completely victorious, and maintained their independence. The tombs of the two generals of the Imperial army who were slain in the action are still shown.

The inhabitants of this district are mostly Greek Christians, and their principal convent is called Bellamund, evidently a corruption of the name of its founder, the celebrated Bohemond, of the Crusades. Its principal produce is corn and tobacco, the latter being of a very superior quality, owing to the abundant manure supplied by the numerous herds of goats which range over its undulating hills and wooded steeps.

Bellad Batroon extends from the river Jose to Medfoon, and comprises the low country between the sea coasts and the first range of mountains. Its principal town, Batroon, the ancient Botrys, is but a large kind of village, with a port blocked up and next to useless, but capable of being made wide and commodious whenever the resources of art and industry shall again be brought to bear upon the long-neglected capabilities of this once flourishing country.

A few paltry salt pits amongst the rocks on the coast, generally monopolized by the Turkish government, is all that it has to boast of in the way of production. The waters of the river Jose, taking their source near the village of Kaferhuldy, and flowing through a valley about fifteen miles in length, were anciently brought to the town by a canal, and by this means it is still supplied.

The castle of Mesalaha, at more than an hour's distance, on the road to Tripoli, must by its singular and isolated position, perched as it is on a rock jutting out of the midst, and within pistol shot of the sides of the ravine in which it stands, have offered an almost insuperable obstacle to any army coming from the North in former times. Commanded as it is, however, on each side by superior eminences, it could never have any influence on modern operations of war.

Djebail, the ancient Byblos, lies between Medfoon and Feedan. The lower region embraces the plains, from the sea coast to the mountains, and extends up to the highland district of Meneytri, the latter containing an old castle, and a mixed population of Christians and Metualis. The river

Ibrahim, the ancient Adonis, taking its source in the remarkable cave of Aphaca, near to which, according to Zozimus, stood a temple dedicated to Venus, where the handsomest girls in Syria were annually sacrificed, descends through a valley eighteen miles in length, and makes its debouché at about five miles south of the modern town of Djebail.

It is mentioned by ancient writers, that the waters of this river annually assumed a reddish colour, and various explanations have been attempted to account for so singular a phenomenon; whereas the simple fact seems to have been, that the expression was merely a metaphorical allusion to the sanguinary rites performed yearly near the cave of Aphaca. There are still the ruins of a temple on the spot, and the scenery around is remarkably grand and picturesque.

The greater security that has existed in the plains and towns which lie at the foot of the Lebanon, since the occupation of Syria by Ibrahim Pacha, compared with former periods, is remarkably corroborated by the rise and influence of one individual, whose residence is now at Am-

sheet, near the town of Djebail. Michael Toobea, a Maronite, sprung from the ranks of the common people, was, about twenty years ago, what is called a fellah. Inheriting a few hundred piastres from his father, he economized, embarked in a small traffic, and was fortunate.

Sheik Mirheim Dahdah, to whom he had been personally useful, being about to embark for Marseilles, where he now conducts a considerable establishment, offered to procure him an extent of credit which would enable him to enlarge his sphere of transactions. This offer was gladly accepted, as it proved to be the key-stone of his future fortunes. His speculations turned out successfully.

The Egyptian government offered no obstacles to the accumulation of wealth. His enterprise, caution, and judgment, had fair play. In a very short time he assumed, and was conceded, the rank and standing of a merchant. But this was not all. Making his native village of Amsheet the centre of his operations, he commenced a system which soon brought him into intimate relations with the entire neighbouring population—that of making advances of money on the silk crops.

The peasantry of a country where subsistence is mostly meagre and scanty, readily accept a temporary and necessary relief to their wants, though with an ultimate loss. The gain to the lender is certain. He has only to wait till the harvest time, whether of silk or other produce, comes round, and he finds himself reimbursed with an interest varying from fifteen to twenty-five per cent., according to the terms of his contract with the borrower. Toobea has become an extensive landed proprietor, and as a landlord his character is unimpeachable.

Estates, domains, villages, have been bought up by him, and are being improved under his careful and vigilant superintendence. The authority and empty display of the Feudal Sheik has entirely disappeared before the genius of this substantial representative of the Middle Classes.

Throughout the entire districts of Batroon and Djebail, the political influence of Michael Toobea is complete and unquestioned; which may be readily conceived from one simple fact, exhibiting at once his means and his philanthropy. The Emir Bechir Shehaab, whose orders none ever ventured to dispute, or to qualify, sent an Emir, accompa-

nied by several horsemen, with strict injunctions to quarter themselves on the peasantry until the uttermost farthing of the miri had been paid up.

They arrived at the house of Michael Toobea, and stated their errand. Knowing the ruinous severity of the quartering system on the poor people, he entreated them for once to disobey the Emir's commands, took the whole responsibility on himself, paid in one round sum the entire miri of the provinces of Batoom, Djebail and Fetooah, out of his own private funds, and after an hospitable entertainment, dismissed his astonished guests with the assurance that he would arrange with all defaulters, however numerous, at their convenience.

The versatility of his mental powers may be conceived from the fact, that he is constantly in the habit of dictating to five secretaries at the same time, on various matters connected with his multifarious business; and the minutest details are severally and simultaneously handled with the most perfect clearness and precision. Nor is it only in matters connected with commerce that he evinces superiority.

His historical knowledge is something extraordinary, and he will treat of the forms and working of the different European governments with a fluency and correctness which evinces the active and inquiring spirit of one determined to excel in all departments of intellectual greatness. Gifted by nature with a power of memory from whose retentive grasp no fact, no information, however trivial, once acquired, can possibly escape, and with a sound practical judgment, his application and perseverance have enabled him to rear upon these inappreciable advantages, a social, commercial, and political reputation, which may challenge the competition—as it deserves, and has obtained the admiration of his fellow-countrymen.

His position is one to which no Christian has ever yet attained under the Turkish government, and it sufficiently indicates that civilization and commerce will pursue the same course, and be attended with the same social and political results in the East, as amongst the nations of Europe.

El Fetooah. From the river Ibrahim to the valley of Maameltane; and in breadth about twelve miles, from the sea-coast to the mountains. Its

population, Maronites, with a few Metualis. The Sheiks of the house of Dahdah, though not of any considerable rank or standing, have their vassals and dependents in this district.

At the village of Aramoon is a school for Maronite boys, intended for the church. It was through the valley of the Fetooah that the Mahomedan invaders effected an entrance into the mountains of the Maronites, and its name is derived from an Arabic word which signifies "to open," the enemy having here "opened" their way into the interior.

Kesrouan. Lies between the valley of Maameltane and the Dog river. The fertility of its plains contrasts strongly with the rocky nature of its highlands.

It is covered with convents. The Dog river, which is its southern boundary, takes its source a little below Geita, where there is a remarkable cave. It is joined in its course by two rivers, taking their sources from two of the most remarkable springs in the country, called Asal and Lebban. Asal is the Arabic word for honey, as Lebban is for curded milk.

The colour of the pebbles round about the one

spring is of a bright yellow, about the other of a snowy white; and hence the origin of their designation. The thermometer on being thrust into them falls in less than a minute to the freezing point, a degree of coldness which is no doubt caused by their absorption of the snows above them; a process which is going on the whole of the summer in the highest summits of the Lebanon. The principal town of this province, Zook Mikayal, agreeably situated on a slight eminence above the sea, has lately increased in importance. It is the silk emporium of the Kesrouan, and neighbouring districts, as the bay of Djouni, immediately below it, is their port for the importation of corn. Near it is Zook-il-Haraab, so called from its having been for a long time depopulated, though formerly the residence of the Kurds, when they had fortune and even power on these shores.

All attempts to repopulate this place—and they have been made till very lately, have proved abortive. From whatever cause arising,—from the unhealthiness of the locality, or from the nature of the soil, which is of a white glaring limestone, no family ever settled here without losing half its

number before the year transpired. The experiments will probably ere long entirely cease, though poverty, and the inability to remove, may detain its few miserable inhabitants until disease and death create a solitude.

A little above Zook Mikayal, on the left hand of the road to Bzommar, is the convent of Bekerke, now used as a winter residence by the Maronite Patriarchs. In the last century it was a convent for nuns. It obtained a frightful celebrity, and the mind involuntarily shudders at the reflection that the system of virginity and apparent sanctity which the Romish church encourages, may be continuously giving birth to actions resulting from the most enslaving passions of mankind, and which the mysterious veil of secresy foments, at the same time that it conceals. What was providentially discovered at Bekerke cannot be better given than in the words of Volney.

"About the year 1755, there was in the neighbourhood of the Jesuit missionary a Maronite girl, named Hendia, whose extraordinary mode of life began to attract the attention of the people. She fasted, wore the hair cloth, possessed the gift of

tears, and, in a word, had all the exterior of the ancient hermits, and soon acquired a similar reputation. Everybody considered her as a model of piety, and many esteemed her a saint. From such a reputation to miracles the transition is very easy, and in fact, it was soon reported that she worked miracles. To have a proper conception of the effects of this report, we must not forget that the state of men's minds in the Lebanon is nearly the same as in the earliest ages. There were neither infidels, therefore, nor wits nor doubters.

"Hendia availed herself of this enthusiasm for the completion of her designs, and imitating the conduct of her predecessors in the same career—she wished to become the foundress of a new order.

"In vain does the human heart endeavour to conceal its passions; they are invariably the same, nor does the conqueror differ from the monk, both are alike actuated by ambition and the lust of power, and the pride of pre-eminence displays itself even in the excess of humility. To build a convent, money was necessary; the foundress solicited the pious charity of her followers, whose contributions were so abundant as to enable her in a few

years to erect two vast stone houses, which could not have cost less than five thousand pounds.

" They are called the Kourhet (Bekerke), and are situated on the ridge of a hill to the north west of Antoora; having to the west a view of the sea, and an extensive prospect to the south as far as the road of Beyrout, which is four leagues distant. Bekerke was soon filled with monks and nuns. The Patriarch for the time being was director general, and other employments of various kinds were conferred on the different priests and candidates, to whom one of these houses was allotted. Everything succeeded as well as could have been wished; it is true that many of the nuns died, but this was imputed to the air, and the real cause was not easy to be discovered. Hendia had reigned over her little kingdom near twenty years when an unfortunate accident threw everything into confusion.

" A factor, travelling from Damascus to Beyrout in the summer, was overtaken by night near this convent; the gates were shut, the hour unseasonable, and as he did not wish to give any trouble, he contented himself with a bed of straw, and laid

himself down in the outer court, waiting the return of the day. He had only slept a few hours, when a sudden noise of doors and bolts awoke him.

"From one of the doors came out three women with spades and shovels in their hands, who were followed by two men, bearing a long white bundle, which appeared very heavy. They proceeded towards an adjoining piece of ground, full of stones and rubbish, where the men deposited their load, dug a hole into which they put it, and covering it with earth, trod it down with their feet; after which they all returned to the house. The sight of men with nuns, and this bundle thus mysteriously buried by night, could not but furnish matter of reflection to the traveller. Astonishment at first kept him silent, but to this, anxiety and fear soon succeeded; he therefore hastily set off for Beyrout at break of day.

"In this town he was acquainted with a merchant, who some months before had placed two of his daughters at Bekerke, with a portion of about four hundred pounds. He went in search of him, still hesitating, yet burning with impatience to relate his adventure.

"They seated themselves cross-legged, the long pipe was lighted and coffee brought. The merchant then proceeded to inquire of his visitor concerning his journey, who answered, he had passed the night near Bekerke. This produced fresh questions to which he replied by further particulars, and at length, no longer able to contain himself, whispered to his host what he had seen. The merchant was greatly surprised; the circumstance of burying the bundle alarmed him, and the more he considered it, the more his uneasiness increased. He knew that one of his daughters was ill, and could not but remark that a great many nuns had died.

"Tormented with these thoughts, he knows not how either to admit or reject the dismal suspicions they occasion; he mounts his horse, and accompanied by a friend, they repair together to the convent, where he asks to see his daughters. He is told they are sick; he insists they shall be brought to him; this is angrily refused, and the more he persists the more peremptory is the refusal, till his suspicions are converted into certainty. Leaving the convent in an agony of despair, he

went to Deir el Kammar, and laid all the circumstances before the Kehié* of the Emir Yoosuf Shehaab. The Kehié was greatly astonished, and ordered a body of horse to accompany him, and if refused admission to force the convent.

"The Kadi took part with the merchant, and the affair was referred to the law; the ground where the bundle had been buried was opened, and a dead body found, which the unhappy father discovered to be that of his youngest daughter; the other was found confined in the convent, and almost dead. She revealed a scene of such abominable wickedness as makes human nature shudder, and to which she, like her sister, was about to fall a victim.

"The pretended saint being seized, acted her part with firmness, and a prosecution was commenced against the priests and the patriarch. The affair was referred to Rome in 1766, and the society 'De Propaganda,' on examination, discovered the most infamous scenes of debauchery, and the most horrid cruelties. It was proved that Hendia procured the death of the nuns, some to get

* The title of a chief secretary of a governor.

possession of their property; and others, because they would not comply with her desires; that this infamous woman not only communicated, but even consecrated the host and said mass; that she had holes under her bed by which perfumes were introduced at the moment she pretended to be in ecstasy, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost; that she had a faction who cried her up and published that she was the Mother of God returned upon earth, and a thousand other extravagancies.

"Notwithstanding this, she retained a party powerful enough to prevent the severe punishment she merited; she has been shut up in different convents, from which she has frequently escaped. In 1783, she was present at the visitation of Aintoora; and the brother of the Emir Yoosuf was desirous of giving her her liberty. Numbers still believe in her sanctity; and but for the accident of the traveller, her present enemies would not have doubted it."

The remembrance of this affair is still kept up traditionally in the minds of the present generation. It is a subject, however, avoided as much

as possible, or alluded to with a laugh, as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. It has certainly not had the slightest effect on the conventual system, which is supported amongst all sects in this country as much as ever. The convent doors of the nunneries are impenetrably closed on their occupants; but whether God or the Devil reigns within, must always be a matter of conjecture.

CHAPTER III.

Ghazir, the residence of the House of Habashe, stands on an agreeable eminence about two hours to the north of Bekerke. The House of Habashe is the most ancient amongst all the noble families of Lebanon. It is certain, that their ancestors were influential leaders of the Maronites during the first Crusade. Originally feudal proprietors in Djebail, they came and settled at Ghazir, in the year 1535, where they successively served the Emirs of the House of Safa and Assaf, in the capacity of Kehiés, or Secretaries. The House of Maan conferred on them the government of Ghazir, which they have retained ever since. At the present day, however, these Sheiks have a mere shadow of authority, and find themselves obliged to submit with the best grace

they can, to the rising importance and sterling worth of Elias Boghos. In this respectable Maronite we see another instance of the triumph of commerce over feudalism.

He is the virtual ruler of the Macaata, over which the Sheiks Habashe nominally sway. The people rally round him. Lately, in an affray which occurred at Ghazir, where he resides, the Sheiks got very roughly handled, and their assailants escaped with impunity. He has a silk manufactory there, which is well-conducted and thriving. Sheik Haleel Habashe, the head of the family, some months ago went to Constantinople, and left him his agent, an appointment which has come powerfully in aid of the moral ascendency of his character, by giving it the force and countenance of official sanction.

The most important Sheik House amongst the Maronites is that of Haazin, who inhabit the Kesrouan. Its origin is not of the most illustrious, proceeding as it does from a shoemaker of the name of Habeeb il Haazin, who immigrated from the Houran about the middle of the sixteenth century, and settled at the village

of Goshe, in Djebail, where he and his descendants lived in obscurity, until the days of the Emir Fakaradeen Maan.

This chieftain, whose early career was clouded by adversity, found a hospitable asylum under the roof of Abou Nader il Haazin, a circumstance which was not forgotten by him at a subsequent period of his life, when he held in his hands the destinies of the Lebanon. He raised Abou Nader to the dignity of Sheik, addressed him in his letters as "my beloved brother," and gave him the whole district of Kesrouan, as a Macaata, or Principality. The fortunes and consideration of his family rose proportionately, though not without creating jealousies.

The Sheiks, at a subsequent period, sought for countenance and support from without the circle of their co-religionists, and entered into close and intimate alliance with the Druse House of Jumblatt; a connexion which, more particularly in the times of Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, the contemporary and more than rival of the Emir Bechir Shehaab, proved eminently useful to them, but which now, amidst the changes which have of late

so completely altered the nature of the relations between the Christians and Druses, has become merely nominal.

Their principal residence is Ajeltoon, but in the summer months they generally occupy the higher ranges of the Kesrouan, each family proceeding to some little village where it has property. The arbitrary and almost irresponsible authority which they formerly possessed, has been considerably abridged by the concentration of power in the divan of the Emir Heider, a result which, if not contemplated as regards the feudal power in the Lebanon, has certainly been effected, as far as the Maronite districts are concerned, by the political arrangement of 1845. Nor are the people there likely to allow of a relapse into their former state of servitude.

They are fully alive to the amelioration in their political condition which has recently taken place, and there are new leaders springing up amongst them, as has been observed, ready to throw over them the shield of protection, and to offer them the hand of encouragement, in case of need.

The chief Maronite schools are at Ain Warka,

Mar Abda, Hurhureya, Roomea, Kefrhai, and Kfeefan. Most of these are seminaries for the clergy, where Arabic and Syriac are taught, as also philosophy and theology. At the two former places is added Latin and Italian.

All these schools have property attached to them, and the education is gratuitous. Yearly examinations are held by a board of visitors appointed by the Patriarch, who report on the progress of the scholars. A few of the most promising are sent to the convent of Aintoora, where they are trained for the home mission, and from whence they proceed on their duties of reading and preaching to the people, from place to place. Here is the principal scholastic establishment, founded and kept by the Lazarists.

The sons of the Maronite Emirs and Sheiks, as well as merchants, are mostly sent thither for their education. It receives about fifty scholars, at an annual pay of fifteen hundred piastres, or twelve pounds a-year, which comprises board and education. But subscriptions from Rome and France are yearly obtained, to supply any deficiencies of income. French, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, arith-

metic, and geography, are the usual courses of study. The dormitories are clean and regular. The walls of the refectory are lined with sixteen prints, exhibiting the miracles performed by Vincent St. Paul, the founder of the order, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago.

That this school is one of the means employed to keep up the prestige of the French name in this country, cannot be doubted. What must be the moral atmosphere of a school-room, where the most prominent picture is one of the appearance of the Virgin Mary, with the following inscription explanatory of its import; and not only this, but medals of the picture, are given to the boys, to hang about their necks. The Virgin is represented as appearing to a nun, in a convent at Paris. The nun is kneeling in a chapel; the Virgin is seen over the altar, with arms extending downwards, and rays of light emanating from the fingers of her open hands. Underneath is seen written in French:

"Towards the end of the year 1830, the young sister of charity, M——, being at prayers, saw the Virgin of Immaculate Conception, as she is represented in the medal, surrounded with glory,

and having a globe under her feet," (on this globe, by the way, is written the word '*France*' in conspicuous letters.) "Vivid rays of light darted in great profusion from her hands, but concentrated on one particular spot. Suddenly a voice exclaimed—'These rays are the symbol of grace which Mary obtains for mankind, and the point of the globe where they fall in more abundance than on any other, is *France!*' The following words were seen at the same time written in letters of gold—'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thy intercession.' The vision all at once changed; and, by a rapid transition, appeared the letter 'M,' surmounted by a cross, and having underneath the two sacred hearts of Mary and Jesus, while the same voice was heard to say—'Strike a medal in commemoration of this vision; whoever shall wear it, and repeat this prayer, shall enjoy the special protection of the Mother of God!'"

The school moves up at the commencement of the summer heat to Rafoon, for greater coolness and salubrity.

The Franciscans have a convent at Harissa, and the Jesuits a college at Ghazir. This latter has

been established about six or seven years. A complete course of arithmetic, geography, philosophy, rhetoric, belles lettres, Arabic, Latin, Italian, and French, is here gone through. The pupils are boarded and educated for fifteen pounds a-year. In the last century, the Jesuits had several establishments in this country, at Aleppo, Damascus, Smyrna, and Aintoora; but when their order was abolished, all these were abandoned. The French government conceded the buildings to the Lazarists. In the time of Ibrahim Pasha, the Jesuits recommenced their operations, and have already opened seminaries at Beyrout, Zahle, and Ghazir. The convent of Esharfe is the residence of the patriarch of the Syrian church. The Armenian Catholic clergy fled from the persecution of the Turkish government at Aleppo, about one hundred and thirty years ago, and finding an asylum in Mount Lebanon, amongst the rocky heights of the Kesrouan, built a convent on a spot called Bzommaar, which is now the residence of their patriarch. The patriarchs of the Maronites and the Armenian Catholics are chosen by the bishops in secret conclave, and by ballot.

The highlands of the Kesrouan and of Djebail

abound in mineral matter, though as yet their capabilities have been but slightly tried. Iron is the only ore that has been extracted; and of this there are only two mines worthy of notice, one at about an hour from Akoora, the other near Shweir. These regions afford excellent grass in the spring season, particularly at Watty-il-Burj. Here may be seen, at that period of the year, Turkomen, Kurds, and Arabs, with their herds and flocks, crowding to its rich pastures and abundant waters; the latter resulting from the melting of the snows. Here they find repose and refreshment from their long and weary travel from the plains of the interior, and hither the retail dealers assemble to purchase the sheep, which, through their medium, are afterwards distributed to the peasantry of the Lebanon.

El Metten. The vast basin of the Metten, divided by two mountains, running in parallel ranges from the heights of Kurneille to those of Brumana, is almost exclusively a forest of firs. The sandy nature of the soil is peculiarly adapted to the growth of this tree. It abounds, however, with villages, in whose immediate vicinity the mulberry and vine

are successfully cultivated. Occasional springs occur, which are surrounded by the wild Rhododendron, in beautiful luxuriance. The sale of timber is the principal resource of its inhabitants. No care is taken to keep up the race of the old trees as they are removed. The cones which fall to the ground come up spontaneously, and are left gradually to supply the place of their predecessors. The idea of planting for posterity is here unknown; and should the demand ever become very extensive, there is little doubt that the fir will ultimately have to yield to the vine.

In this district, stand conspicuous the feudal residences of Kurneille, Soleema, El Mettane, Ras El Metten, Felooga and Brumana, all appertaining to various Emirs of the House of Bilemma. The architecture of these edifices, is nameless. They are solid, irregular masses of masonry, without plan or symmetry; built for strength and defence. If ever ornament is attempted, it is on the entrance, which, as at Felooga, displays a very creditable degree of handywork. The gateway and the Meedan are indeed the only places where an Emir or Sheik ever thinks of making an expenditure for

mere outward show. The former, because there he exhibits his state and authority, receiving his vassals and dependants on business, and his friends and guests with ostentatious hospitality; the latter, inasmuch as it affords a ready and inviting field for the display of his stud, and of those feats of horsemanship, which in the East, is almost an indispensible ingredient of baronial reputation.

The vaults, however, are broad and capacious, and used in former times, to be generally well-stored. When the plains of the Bekaa were under their control, and its well filled granaries a source of yearly supply, the aristocracy of the Lebanon, whether Druse or Christian, lived in affluence; no inconsiderable portion of their revenue likewise arose from a per centage, varying from six to ten piastres, on the heads of the male population over which they ruled, and which was very carefully abstracted from the Miri, together with sundry other deductions not much questioned, before it was paid over to the government. Within these last ten years, since the restoration of Syria to the Porte, both these sources of territorial and pecuniary income have been abridged. An imperial firman has

deprived them of the one, and a new political and fiscal arrangement, of the other. They are now in comparative penury. Nearly all the castles above alluded to, were burnt and destroyed in the civil war between the Druses and Maronites. Their proprietors, with one exception, that of the Emir Moosa Bilemma, of El Mettane, who happened to have a good sum of money saved up, are too poor to rebuild them. The others live in villages, avoiding rather than courting the respects of their vassals.

The feudal tie, however, which binds them together, is not yet entirely broken. Still they are at the call of their chiefs. Still, as of old, on the birth of a son, or a marriage in the Emir's family, and on the festivals of Christmas and Easter-day, the peasantry may be seen carrying their tribute of fowls, coffee, sugar, &c., to the feudal abode; but what was once accepted as a mark of dependence, is now anticipated as a means of existence.

This imposition on the people is no doubt irksome, but it is a custom founded on long usage, and in the actual state of society here, all but indis-

pensable. Such is the nature of the compact under which the peasants cultivate the soil, and such the power which the present form of political government gives the Emir or Sheik over them, that any attempt, on their part, to abrogate the system, would not fail of being visited on them with various vexations and annoyances, an exemption from which is cheaply purchased by an occasional present. There can be nothing very objectionable in a tenant making an occasional offering to his landlord, provided it be spontaneous, and the tribute of a heart grateful for favours and bounties received; and in such a case, is as gratifying to the recipient, as it is creditable to the donor. But in the Lebanon, no such ground exists for sympathy between the tenant and proprietor.

The peasant, if overtaken by sickness or poverty, has to shift for himself the best way he can; his landlord neither extends the hand of charity, nor consoles him by the voice of inquiry and consolation. Each moves in his own sphere, separate and distinct, and the only ground of contact and communion, is haughty superiority on the one side, and forced submission and dependence on the

other. Under such circumstances the offering becomes a tax.

The House of Bilemma takes its origin from the Arab tribe of Beni Fowaris, one of the twelve tribes who immigrated to the Lebanon from the neighbourhood of Aleppo A.D. 821. They pitched their tents on the Metten, and in the course of time, as the population increased, became Mukudameen, a title inferior to that of Emir, but implying the possession of power and rule. About the middle of the sixteenth century, one of the Mukudameen, called Abou Lemma, fixed his residence at Kaferslewan, an agreeable site in the high ground of the district. Here he had two sons, Mraad and Kaidbey, whose descendants now form two of the branches of the family of Bilemma. Mraad, giving his name to the branch of which he was the head, built the castle of El Mettane; Kaidbey, whose posterity have likewise assumed his as the family name, that of Soleema. The castles of Kurneille and Felooga were raised by the descendants of the former, that of Brumana by those of the latter. A third branch of the family, adhering pretty closely to the original nomenclature of their ances-

tors, and called the house of Faris, reside at Beskinta; thus extending their property and influence over the entire district of the Metten, of which it is now the great Feudal House.

They were until very lately, Druses. But when the House of Shehaab, from political reasons, chose to abandon the faith of their ancestors, with that facility of conversion for which they are remarkable,* and embrace Christianity, the House of Bilemma, with whom they intermarried, followed in their steps, at no considerable distance. One old lady of the family, however, still delights in the mysterious doctrines of Hamzé,† and declares she will be buried in the faith in which she was brought up. Her obstinacy may be lamented, but at least, it has the redeeming quality of sincerity; whereas the Roman Catholicism of her relations, has too evidently not penetrated beyond the external demeanour of its professors.

The jolly Emirs of the house of Mraad, at El Mettane, would be the boast and glory of a civic feast, by their substantial proportions, and their

* Several of the Shehaab Emirs have lately returned to the Mahommedan faith.

† Founder of the Druse religion.

bland and amiable manners. The half-suppressed infidelity which breaks out in their conversation, and the cynic sneer in which they indulge, when speaking of the fastings, confessions, and erratic adorations of the Romish Church, clearly announce that their adopted religion has something in it, in their eyes, supremely ridiculous; and which they would gladly shake off if they could. Indeed they are regarded with the strongest feelings of distrust and suspicion, by their co-religionists. Nor is this all. In the late civil war between the Maronites and Druses, the Maronites burnt their palace down to the ground. The fanatics of Deir el Kammar, partly fired by religious zeal, but principally by a thirst of vengeance against their ever superior rivals, twice summoned the Emirs to join in the general cause of Druse extermination. The Emir Moosa, as head of the family, very wisely replied, that he would take no part, as he felt no interest in a quarrel, of which mutual destruction and impoverishment could be the only results, and that he should do all in his power to preserve his vassals and dependants in a strict neutrality. The Maronites departed, muttering threats of vengeance. The

Emirs rode over to Kurneille, to demand from the Pasha who was there, the presence of a Turkish force, as a protection and guarantee against the renewal of a similar summons; but scarcely had they arrived, when they beheld the smoke ascending in one dark column above their castle walls. The threat had been executed. The work of destruction was accomplished. It cannot be matter of surprise that their adherence to the Romish Church should be cold and lukewarm.

Not so their cousin, the Emir Heider, head of the house of Kaidbey, and now governor of the Maronites. Embracing Christianity at the age of twelve years, the priesthood have contrived to make this converted Druse, the very child and pattern of Romish superstition. No monk can be more faithful to his vigils and fastings. The bishop confessor is never out of his house. In the palace he has lately completed at Beckfeya, the chapel is a perfect bijou, luxuriating in exquisite pictures of Saints and Madonnas. This is his favourite place of resort. Here mostly, when not engaged in business, is he to be found, seated on the sill of the window, counting his beads, and indulging in unheard-of mutterings.

Yet it must be admitted that he is a most estimable nobleman. His character is evidently influenced by the better principles of Christianity. The outlines of his countenance are strikingly aristocratic, and his deportment and the repose of his manners, eminently gentlemanlike. Kind-hearted, generous, and hospitable, he maintains his rank and the duties of his position with firmness and dignity, receiving, in person, the petitions of the various applicants who daily crowd to his office. His great aim and endeavour, is to be impartial. He is consequently universally esteemed and beloved. His present elevation was however preceded by a severe reverse of fortune. He was one of the last victims of the unscrupulous government of the Emir Bechir. Accused of being a participator in the rising of 1840, he was summoned to Ebtedeen, with every assurance of friendship and security. He obeyed the summons, but had no sooner entered the spacious quadrangle of the palace, than he was seized and thrown into irons, and in a very few hours he was on the road to Egypt, in company with other exiles.

Scarcely arrived at Sidon, the Egyptian officer

commanding the detachment—whether instructed to do so or otherwise is not known—determined to try the nerves of his prisoners. They were drawn out on the sea shore, in single file, while the soldiers were ordered to level their muskets against them, at the ordinary distance of military execution. The Emir Heider fainted on the spot, and was with some difficulty restored to his senses. This anecdote is not given in disparagement, but as characteristic.

Such a temperament could never have wielded despotic power in the Lebanon for a day. Supported by constitutional forms, which relieve him from the stern necessity of wielding the implements of terror and severity, and which present a field for the display of the finer feelings of humanity, he is well adapted to carry out the mild regime which actually exists. The sufferings which the Emir underwent on his journey to Sennar, two months up the Nile, and the indignities to which he was exposed, were those of a felon: chained by the ancle to another, staggering with weakness and fever, goaded on by the incessant kurbash, he would most probably, had not the British govern-

ment opportunely interfered to save him and his companions, have sunk under the weight of his privations. Nor has the interposition been forgotten. By being brought intimately in contact with, he has been enabled to study the British character, to understand and to appreciate the straightforwardness of British diplomacy, and although a Maronite,—a very bigoted Maronite,—he is worldly wise enough to know the value of British counsels. And it is this wisdom, together with his own upright and honest disposition, which has enabled him to bear up against the intrigues which have been fomented against him.

The Emir Bechir might have been less severe without endangering his authority, and motives of gratitude at least ought to have tempered his proceedings. More than once, when a fugitive and an exile, his family found shelter and protection in the hospitable castle of Soleema, the Emir Heider's ancestral abode. At the same time a lively sense of past favours could not be supposed to have had much influence with a prince, who through life had ever sacrificed all considerations to the consolidation of his power; and no doubt

his experienced and umbrageous policy led him to strike at the head of the House of Bilemma, as feeling that in so doing, he was removing a noble who amidst the confusion and tumult of insurrection, might have become a rallying point and a rival.

CHAPTER IV.

One of the most delightful residences in this district, is the Castle of Kurneille, commanding a most extensive prospect over the wooded ranges of the Metten, with a view of Beyrout and the sea in the distance.

Its Emirs, too poor to keep up their wonted state, live in obscure habitations in another part of the country, and let it out occasionally to the Consular authorities, who gladly avail themselves of passing the summer in its cool and delightful atmosphere. It was the scene of a terrible catastrophe in the year 1846. Mr. Wildenbrook, the Prussian Consul-general, had retired there with his family, to spend the summer months. He had residing with him, in the capacity of governess

to his children, a young lady, the daughter of a retired officer in the Prussian army at Trieste.

Young, lovely, and prepossessing, she had engaged the affections of Mr. Shultz, the Prussian Consul at Jerusalem, to whom she was engaged to be married. Unfortunately, her beauty had already excited feelings of love and passion in the breast of one of the Consul-general's domestics. He also aspired to her hand. Maddened by jealousy at the preference given to his rival, and feeling that all his hopes were about to be frustrated, he determined on a deadly revenge. Various hints, murmured at intervals, however, put the Consul-general on his guard, and he had made preparations for removing him out of the country. The man appeared suddenly one morning at Kurneille. Mrs. Wildenbrook, dreading his presence, sent him off with letters immediately to her husband, then in Beyrout. Feeling instinctively that this was a manœuvre to place him in the hands of his master, he returned without delay to the castle with a double-barrelled gun in his hand, abruptly entered the drawing-room, and found Mr. Shultz and his innocent and lovely affianced, standing and talking

with each other in the large sash of the window, at the extremity of the apartment. The poor girl, on seeing him, extended her arms, and uttered a cry of alarm; but the bullet had already accomplished its errand, and, shot through the heart, she fell bleeding and lifeless into the arms of her lover. The ruffian fled, but being closely pursued, blew his own brains out with the contents of the remaining barrel. Mr. Shultz shortly after became deranged. Being put under proper treatment, and permitted to return to Europe, he recovered so far as to be able to resume his official duties. But the shock on his spirits and constitution were irreparable, and a few months ago, he died at Jerusalem.

At about two hours distance, behind Kurneille, is the village of Kaferslewan, the abode of Soliman Bachmet, a Druse Sheik, another descendant of the Beni Fowaris. Once a man of considerable wealth, his means dwindled away under the exactions of the Emir Bechir, to whom he was personally obnoxious, for his adherence to Sheik Bechir Jumblatt; and in the late civil war, his mansion was entirely pillaged and destroyed. The grounds

about Kaferslewan are a game preserve for the Emir Heider, the only place in the whole Lebanon where such a privilege is tolerated. The red-legged partridge is here found in abundance, but the manner of sport is far different from that in Europe. Here, the Emirs have little or no idea of the healthy and invigorating exercise of pursuing their game from mountain to mountain, of marking down the birds, and putting them up before firing. They never think of taking the field, until certain indispensable preliminaries have been arranged.

The keepers precede them about a fortnight or three weeks, during which period, a portion of each day is employed in sprinkling barley on certain longitudinal pieces of board, placed in different parts of the range. A small hut, made of loose stones, sufficient to contain a single individual in a crouching position, and covered with furze, is constructed at the head of each board, with a loop-hole pointing directly upon it. The partridges gradually get accustomed to their feeding places, and at the expiration of the time, may be seen morning and evening luxuriating in flocks on their delicious and abundant fare. The noble sportsman

now enters his ground, with perfect certainty of success. Long ere break of day he proceeds to his little hut, singly and unattended; there he squeezes himself in, and in breathless silence awaits the arrival of his game. Hour after hour passes away; at length the birds gradually drop in; they thicken, they accumulate, the board is full. The utmost caution is now requisite. The slightest rustle will put them all to flight.

Slowly and gradually the muzzle is adjusted in the loop-hole. Point blank aim is taken, the piece is discharged, and at one fell swoop, five, ten, and fifteen brace are bagged. Congratulations pour in from all sides on the glorious result of the day's sport, which is renewed day after day, for nearly a month, with varying success, until the year's coveys are all but annihilated. The awkward sportsman is not he who misses his fire, (that would be impossible,) but he who by his agitation and excitement in the hut, makes the birds get up without being fired at at all.

The Europeans are laughing the Emirs out of this childish and barbarous pastime; and there are Emirs and Sheiks now to be found, who have the courage

and perseverance to take flying shots. Wild boars abound in the wooded heights of the Metten, and would no doubt afford an exhilarating occupation to genuine lovers of the chase; but with such sportsmen as those of the Lebanon, it is not to be wondered at that they are left entirely unmolested.

In the valley below Kurneille are the forsaken remains of a coal mine, worked by Ibrahim Pasha. The coal was found to be so deeply impregnated with sulphur as to be nearly useless. Two or three shafts were however sunk, and great quantities were taken to Beyrout, and Shweir, a considerable village of Greek Christians at two hours' distance. In the latter place it was destined to supply the furnaces for smelting the iron, brought from the mine at Murjaba, near El Mettane. But after repeated trials it was found to be wholly inadequate to supply the place of the wild oak, which alone gives heat sufficient to melt the native ore. The entire peasantry of the district were put under levy to supply labourers for the working of this mine. It is true they were paid, but such was the severity of the occupation, and so grievously did it interfere with their other and more indispensable avocations,

that it was at length looked upon as an intolerable burden, and greatly contributed to arouse the spirit of insurrection which latterly displayed itself against the Egyptian government.

The village of Shweir, one of the most considerable in the Lebanon, consisting of a mixed population of Greeks, Greek Catholics, and Maronites, but chiefly the former, is famous for its artisans in every species of manufacture; so useful and industrious indeed are they, that the Emir Bechir conferred on them the singular privilege of being exempt from the forced labour which he used to exact, as necessity required, from the surrounding population. Its iron smelting furnaces are of wide repute, though not the only ones in the Lebanon. The Emir Bechir used to make them a very lucrative monopoly. That of Shweir was farmed out to the Jews of Deir-el-Kammar at eight hundred pounds a-year.

The masons of Shweir are in great demand. They work either by contract, or at an average rate of from two to three shillings a-day. Their manner of building is strong and substantial, but of symmetry and proportion they have not the

remotest idea. There is a spring of water here which dries up at the beginning of summer, and reflows about the end of September, sometimes even before the rains have commenced. This singular property is wholly unaccountable in the eyes of the people. The spring has, therefore, been placed under a tutelary Saint, who is supposed annually to trouble the waters.

On the day of their expected re-appearance, the whole village is in commotion; the bells ring, the priests assemble in their different churches, from whence leading forth a numerous and solemn procession, with uplifted crucifix and floating banner, they go down to the cave which is by the side of the road, and await the accomplishment of the miracle.

Should there be any delay, the saint is loudly invoked; hundreds of lighted tapers flaunt about in all directions; clouds of incense ascend; votive offerings are dedicated; supplications are poured out. Presently the water begins to ooze—it bubbles—it flows. Frantic shouts of rejoicing fill the air; bottles are speedily filled with the sacred element, to be corked up and carefully pre-

served. At length, the crowd, pleased and gratified, disperses; the priests assured of the efficacy of their prayers, the people congratulating themselves on the strength of their faith. The enthusiasm of ignorance and superstition has had its burst.

Yet, could these poor benighted Christians be brought to reflect and consider, they might ascertain the plain and simple fact, that there are other springs in the country subject to a similar flux and reflux, periodical and unvarying; and though they might not be able to explain the phenomenon, they would at least find reason to admit that it was a simple and ordinary process of nature, very generally existing, and not in the least degree miraculous. The idols of the imagination, however, are not so easily surrendered; and a long time must elapse, and many changes must take place, ere the Christianity of the Lebanon be restrained within the bounds of common sense and decorum.

Bate Shebab, extends from the Dog river to the river Unt Elias, and from the sea to near Elias Shwya, a joint Greek and Maronite convent, on the heights above Shweir. The village of Bate

Shebab is the feudal appanage of the House of Bilemma. As a source of revenue, it has ceased to be of much value to the Emirs, since the Freeda, or poll-tax, which they used to levy for their own exclusive use, has been abolished. The power of quartering horsemen in the villages pertaining to their jurisdiction upon any slight pretext, and extorting money, has also been taken away from them, and their power has become almost nominal. In fact, the peasantry have as much reason to rejoice at, as the aristocracy has to lament, the changes which have taken place in the political relations of the Lebanon, since the restoration of the Sultan's government in 1840. In many Maronite districts, feudalism is almost at an end; the middle classes are rising into importance in the towns on the sea-coast, while in the mountains the people, looking to the central divan of the Emir Heider for redress of grievances, have ceased to fear, or even to respect the authority of chiefs, who can no longer exercise over them a capricious and irresponsible authority.

At Beckfeya, this Emir has lately erected a spacious and commodious mansion. Thanks to the

superintendence of an Italian architect, its rooms are laid out in just and corresponding proportions. Its marble courts and jets d'eau, the floors of its receding divans, emulating the ornamental style of Damascus, paved with Mosaic, are an agreeable innovation on the massive and shapeless forms of the chateaux around, in whose structure, strength and capability of defence were the only objects in view.

The plain of Unt Elias, sloping down to the shore, abounds in mulberry plantations, and is artificially irrigated from the river which flows through it to the sea, and which affords an excellent watering station to the ships anchored in St. George's Bay.

The Plain of Beyrout is comprised between the river Beyrout and the river Ghadeer to the south, in length; and in breadth, from the sea to the village of Jumhoor. Shortly after crossing the bridge of the former river, at an hour from Beyrout, and on approaching that city, one is shown the spot where St. George slew the dragon; a tradition which is evidently spurious, from the fact that it has not the slightest estimation in the eyes

of the inhabitants; for it is needless to say, that if the story were generally believed, the site of so wondrous an exploit, and which forms the subject of the standard picture of that warrior, would long ere this have been covered with a church where Saint worship would have been carried to the highest degree of perfection.

The town of Beyrout itself has lately sprung up into considerable importance. Its commerce, within the last ten years, has increased immensely; that with Great Britain taking considerably the lead. A new quarter, consisting of several elegant and substantially-built houses, has lately been added to and somewhat atoned for the narrowness and irregularity of its old streets and bazaars, giving it very much of an European air. The process of building is daily going on outside its walls, in the extensive mulberry gardens by which it is surrounded, and on the wooded acclivities which rise behind it in amphitheatre-like gradation. In every direction the digging of foundations is accompanied by some discovery of antiquities. Wells and reservoirs, vaults filled with earthenware and other materials, bearing the stamp of a very superior

workmanship, and which have bravely outstood the gloom and oblivion of centuries, point to the days when Berytus was the seat of arts, learning, and civilization.

And even more—mingled ideas of Phœnician, Grecian, and Roman greatness crowd upon the spectator's mind, when viewing these exenterated relics of former ages. A city must once have covered nearly the entire plain. Up to the very foot of the mountains, excavations bring to light a solidity and breadth of masonry which no moderns have yet learned to emulate, independent of that portion of it which spreads along the sea-shore in the direction of Sidon, and which an accumulated, and still accumulating region of sand, must for ever render impenetrable.

Not long ago, an accidental opening made in the ground, near the southern gate, disclosed a copious stream of water running towards the town, in a broad, well-paved, and well-arched aqueduct, which, on being examined, was found to go back to a distance that none would venture to explore, and the source of which still remains a mystery. The number of wells which are discovered is certainly

very remarkable, and may warrant the supposition that the original name of the city, probably in its infancy, and before the art of conducting distant waters by aqueducts was known, was taken from the Syriac word *Beer*, which signifies "well."

The changes and reverses which Beyrout has undergone, are not less extraordinary. It arose one of the glories of Phœnicia. It was the delight of Rome. It has twice been thrown down by an earthquake. It became a fishing hut. Again it seems instinct with life and energy, as it were struggling and anxious to resume its former grandeur. Its destinies may yet lead it to become the seat of a civilization founded on the best and purest principles of Christianity, and one of the emporiums of a commerce which shall link together the Eastern and Western world, in the bonds of fraternity and peace.

The Jesuits have lately established a school there. Opposed and prohibited by the Turkish authorities at the outset, they procured masons from the members of their own fraternity, over whom, as Europeans, the government could only exercise an indirect control. Alternately offering

the appearance of submission,—leaving off, and again, as favourable occasions presented themselves, rapidly resuming their work, they succeeded, with that tenacity of purpose for which they are remarkable, in completing the building; and the school is now conducted without the slightest interruption.

The French Sisters of Charity have likewise erected a very large building outside the walls. The edifice is the most striking and elegant in the place. Confining their attention simply to the education of a few native girls, the results of their operations do not seem likely to warrant, certainly not to commensurate, the immense outlay which has been made. The hospital attached to the institution is, however, a very creditable establishment. The diseased poor here receive gratuitous treatment. A French physician, handsomely salaried by the French government, is in constant attendance. The sisters are kind and unremitting in their attentions, which are extended to all, without reference to creed or sect.

The pine wood at the outskirts of Beyrout was first planted by the Emir Fakeradeen Maan, two

hundred and thirty years ago. A few only of the original trees remain. The Egyptian government ordered the large spaces which had become vacant in the course of time, to be ploughed up and sowed. New plantations are now springing up, and the Turkish government seems disposed to imitate an example of industry and foresight, which costs little, and must ultimately be remunerative. The trees, when they get to a certain height, are lopped and cleared of superfluous branches, which are sold for the consumption of the adjacent lime-kilns. In a few years there will be a very respectable show of timber.

CHAPTER V.

The most remarkable feature in the plain of Beyrout, is the Sahara, or olive grove, extending in the direction of Sidon, over a surface of about twenty square miles. It is divided amongst a number of proprietors, but the largest proportion is in the hands of Emirs. The care and culture of the olive trees is consigned to the peasantry, on two conditions. Should the peasant have the means of paying his landlord in money, the fourth of the prime value of the trees, he consumes one-half of the crops. In case he can only offer his labour, he has a third. In either condition it devolves on him to manure and plough, to collect the olives, clean them, squeeze them, and convert them into oil, in which state he hands over to the proprietor his share of the produce.

In the autumn, the period of the harvest, men

women, and children assemble and climb the trees, which they beat with sticks, until the olives are entirely gathered. This operation injures the trees considerably, and the consequence is, they bear only alternate years. The process of picking would in all probability leave the tree strength and vigour enough to put forth its fruit annually, but it is considered too slow and tedious, and the produce of the second year, which is generally full and luxuriant, is considered sufficient to compensate for the preceding year's sterility. The Sahara is flanked on one side by the sea, and on the other by the village and grounds of Hadet, lying at the foot of the mountains, and the residence of the Emirs of the Maronite House of Shehaab.

At its southern extremity stands, on a gentle eminence, the village of Shwyfat, composed exclusively of Greek Christians and Druses, and the residence of the Druse House of Raslan. This family, springing from the great Arab tribe of Beni Fowaris, came into the country along with the House of Tnooh, with which it was connected by the ties of feudal vassalage. One of its Emirs, of the name of Raslan, settled at Shwyfat, and gave his name to his descendants.

The Emir Emeen is the actual governor of the Druses. Taking part in the Druse insurrection of 1842, against Omar Pasha, the representative of the Turkish authority at Ebtedeen, and which the activity and courage of that officer promptly put down, he was obliged to fly. Accompanied by the main body of Druse Sheiks, he first took refuge in the Houran, the favourite and ever-ready resort and stronghold of the rebels of the Lebanon. The Sheiks, after a temporary exile, made their peace with the government, through the humane and effective interference of the British Consul at Damascus.

The Emir Emeen had previously directed his course to Bagdad, where, after one or two hair-breadth escapes from the Arabs, he contrived to arrive in safety. Learning the cause of the fortunate deliverance of his companions, he felt that a tardy appeal to the same quarter would be graceless, and probably ineffective. He took the bold resolution of going direct to Constantinople, and of sueing from the Grand Vizier himself, that pardon and amnesty which the Sheiks had obtained through the medium of a foreign agency. He was

successful. A few months found him restored to the bosom of his family at Shwyfat, where he lived in retirement, poverty, and obscurity.

The incapacity of his brother Achmet for the duties of the station to which he was the first to be called, under the recent arrangements of the Porte for the administration of the Lebanon, paved the way to his own elevation. He received the pelisse of honour, and was constituted Governor of the Druses.

The forms of civil and criminal jurisdiction by which this newly-created office is environed, ostensibly, though it must be confessed not always effectually, interpose between the people and the natural tendencies of this Emir's disposition. Proud, partial, and vindictive, his prepossessions lead him to prejudge cases before they are tried. Ready to sacrifice everything to the spirit of party—for there are parties, though not strictly speaking political, in the mountain—the sufferer of oppression and wrong comes at times for redress and compensation to the constituted authority of the Emir's divan, and is surprised to find in the head of that tribunal, the reflex of his oppressor.

It is true his advocate is at hand, and the case may be too glaring to admit of the display of undisguised and unblushing partiality, in the presence of a council placed to be a check upon injustice and corruption; yet the moral influence of a state-officer holding such a position, with such passions and propensities, cannot fail, nor has it failed, of making a very prejudicial impression on the court over which he presides; especially in a country where the forms of public deliberation are as yet new and scarcely tried, and where the ancient and one may say innate principle of conduct amongst the subordinate holders of place and emolument, is to shape their inclinations according to the easily-divined desires and wishes of the chief ruler.

That a divan so conducted should possess the confidence or respect of the people, could not be expected; and, accordingly, it has fallen into general disrepute. Bloody feuds between families are of frequent occurrence, from the disinclination of the parties to bring the first and originating causes of dissension before a tribunal, where the result of appeal can generally be anticipated, where the

execution of justice, if obtained, would in nine cases out of ten be feeble and ineffective, and where the barometer of legal award is known to be regulated by the temperature of the Emir's private will and caprice.

Over the Sheiks who rule the various districts within his jurisdiction, his authority is nominal. They exercise an independence hitherto unknown amongst them, and to which the character and tendencies of the Druse population lend a powerful aid. The miri, or taxes, which it is their duty to collect and pay into the hands of the Emir's treasurer, they give or withhold in proportions according with their own necessities. He, on his part, connives at such peculation, on condition that they will give him their support, and declare their satisfaction with his administration. A mutual compromise is thus struck between the two parties, which, by displaying weakness and immorality in the quarter where firmness and honesty ought and might, if in proper hands, be exhibited, leads to various other, even more pernicious abuses; and vitiates the whole working of a system, which, viewed as a political experiment, is tolerably well

adapted to the administration of affairs in the mountain, in its present social condition.

The Emir professes himself a Mussulman, regularly attending the mosques, and practising the stated forms and genuflections prescribed by that religion, with a zeal and fervour which might almost justify the supposition that his profession was sincere. He may, perhaps, find such an outward show of devotion very profitable towards the keeping up of his interests with the Turkish authorities, with whom his official duties bring him into daily contact, and whose good-will and favour he most assiduously cultivates. He may, on the other hand, having never been one of the initiated in the Druse religion, have found something captivating and attractive in the doctrines and allurements of the Koran. Whichever be the case, the Druse Sheiks, not at all particular in such matters, come down from their mountain abodes in great pomp and state to visit him at Shwyfat, during the holiday of the Beiram, and there go through the annual farce of paying him the compliments of the season, on the recurrence of that festival.

Emulating in one respect, though in none other,

the example of the Emir Bechir, he is passionately addicted to falconry. Entire villages are laid under contribution to furnish the number of men requisite to carry on the sport with effect. Accompanied by his friends and attendants, he goes to the most distant parts of the country, if requisite, in pursuit of his game, and finds the peasants ready assembled to commence operations. Valley after valley is explored and beaten up for the purpose of raising the birds, and fifteen to twenty brace of partridges a day very ordinarily fall beneath the talons of his well-trained falcons. Indeed, the ground is generally pretty well stripped of its feathered inhabitants ere the signal of retreat is sounded, and the Emir bethinks himself of returning, after a prolonged absence, to the duties of his office—an absence, it may be observed, by no means prejudicial to the interests of the public.

The House of Raslan is placed in the singular position of being obliged to intermarry amongst the members of their own family. The other Emirial houses in the country are Christian, and it would be contrary to usage and etiquette for them to make alliances with the families of Sheiks.

The result of such intermarriages, if long continued, would of course prove highly injurious to their standing and consideration; but such consequences are obviated by the practice very generally prevalent throughout the aristocracy of the Lebanon, of purchasing Circassian slaves from Constantinople, who on their arrival are immediately conceded a position in the harem, proportionate to the rank and station of their husbands.

The villages of Hadet and Baabda, at an easy hour's distance from Beyrout, on the left of the road to Deir El Kammar, are occupied by the Emirs of the House of Shehaab. The Emirs of this family, so fallen from their wonted position of consideration and authority, confine their attention at present, exclusively to the cultivation of their properties and the duties of domestic life. Many of them, however, feel severely the loss of those perquisites and emoluments which fell to their portion, when the head of their House wielded an almost sovereign sway in the Lebanon.

In those palmy days they used to be sent out with delegated powers to the different districts of the mountain, little governors, meeting everywhere

with the most flattering marks of confidence and respect. The entire aristocracy, much more the different orders of the people, invariably yielded to them the honours of precedency. No Emir, or Sheik, whether Druse or Christian, would enter into the presence of an Emir of the House of Shehaab, without going directly up to him and kissing his hand; and nobles, venerable from their age, and immeasurably superior in property and influence, felt it a duty, and an indispensable point of etiquette, to pay this mark of deference even to boys, in that ancient and distinguished family.

The undisputed and hereditary succession of supreme power, which during the space of one hundred and fifty years they had the good fortune to maintain, conspired, together with the acknowledged antiquity of their line, and the lustre of their extraction—two elements which always operate so favourably on the Eastern mind—to render this token of deference, not only not irksome, but acceptable to the nation at large. And the latter expression is not without its meaning. For not a single individual of the entire native population of Syria, of whatever rank, creed, or religion,

would have felt himself authorized in withholding this mark of homage and respect. To tender it, is even now considered a mark of good breeding. It may naturally be supposed, however, that where no consequences can possibly result from its being refused, there are many of the Druse Sheiks, to whom the ascendency of the House of Shehaab is not pregnant with the most agreeable of reminiscences, who are not unwilling to discontinue—and even from vindictive feelings—to take a pleasure in discontinuing, a ceremony which tends to remind them of their former inferiority. And the Shehaabs, indeed, from a consciousness of their actual position, and with that feeling of ancestral pride which is the last to cling to a fallen family, generally avoid a collision, if possible, with parties whom they pretty accurately know will withhold this wonted obeisance.

The family of Shehaab spring from the Arab tribe Beni Mahzoom el Koreishy, a collateral branch of the tribe of Koreish, which gave birth to Mohammed. Their ancestors were consequently the relations, as they were also amongst the earliest adherents, of the prophet. The seat of their tribe

at that period was in the neighbourhood of the Hejaz.

When Abou-Becr, the immediate successor of Mahommed, commenced that system of external aggrandizement which he and his followers so ably carried out, the powerful tribe of the Beni Mahzoom were amongst the first to rally to his standard. Their leader and chief, Harith, the son of Heishem, or Shem, was commissioned by the Caliph to march and assist Aboubeida, the generalissimo of the Mahomedan troops operating in that direction, in the siege of Damascus, then occupied by the forces of the Greek emperor. Their advance into and through the vast plain of the Houran, was one series of brilliant successes. In vain the Greeks attempted, sallying forth and extending themselves in outposts, to withstand and check the inroads of their new antagonists. The wide and circling manœuvres of the Arabs enveloped them in confusion and defeat. To maintain a front or guard a flank, in an open country, where the enemy, by the nature of their mode of warfare, might be said to be everywhere and nowhere, was found out to be hopeless, and they soon fell back and took refuge in the towns.

And herein lies the secret of the amazing rapidity and success of the Mahomedan conquerors. They never wanted supplies. In the open field nothing could resist the tempestuous rushings of their cavalry. On approaching the towns, they first blockaded. As famine began to operate within, they besieged. When the garrison became desponding and faint, they attacked, stormed, and plundered. Harith fell before the walls of Damascus, after that city had surrendered to the Mahomedans. Omar instructed Malek, the son of Harith, to occupy the Houran with his own and some auxiliary tribes, which were placed under his command, and over whom he gave him Emirial rank and authority. He made his head quarters at Shohba, a spot about the centre of that district. This, from henceforward, became the settled habitation of the Beni Mahzoom.

Malek's mother was the daughter of Shehaab, the son of Abdallah El Koreishy, a near relative of Mahommed's mother. Proud of this nearness of blood, and designing to perpetuate the fact of his maternal descent from the family of the Prophet, Malek assumed the name of his maternal

grandfather, and became the head and founder of the family of Shehaab. This Emir survived the taking of Damascus some thirty years, and died at Shohba, where he was succeeded by his son, the Emir Saad, who, at the end of the seventh century, lived there, surrounded by a large and numerous family, and exercising a patriarchal hospitality. Again the tide of war, at the beginning of the eighth century, called them into the sphere of action. The Emir Kassim Shehaab led out three thousand horsemen to the support of the Beni Omeya, and did good service to the Mussulman cause, in his victorious combats with the Greeks of Constantinople. A connected and extended plan of warfare is not suited to the habits of Arab tribes, who live in plenty and abundance on the produce of their flocks; and it is not probable the Shehaabs went for any length of time out of the province over which they ruled.

In the year 867, however, they were themselves attacked by a large incursion of Arab tribes from the Hejaz. The spirit which had actuated them in offensive, was not wanting in defensive warfare. The enemy consisting of more than fifty thousand,

and with all the riches and incumbrances of the wandering race, moved down upon the Houran with a certainty of success. The Emir Aamir allowed them to get entangled amongst the difficult and rugged precipices of the Ledja, and then fell on them with fifteen thousand men, totally routing and dispersing them in all directions, and taking an immense booty.

CHAPTER VI.

In the twelfth century, Damascus was the seat of a government which was, and might well be, the boast of the Moslem; that of the Sultan Nouradeen. The latter years, however, of his glorious and eventful reign, were troubled by the aspiring and wily genius of Saladin. This able commander of the Sultan, who had so far gained his good-will and confidence, as to be confirmed in his self-assumed office of Viceroy of Egypt, after a variety of excuses for not appearing as he was desired, at the court of his Sovereign, at length prepared to assert and defend his independence. The counsels of his aged father detained him from any open act of rebellion; but Nouradeen, on his part, foresaw that without some act of vigour, the finest of his provinces would elude his grasp.

It became known on all sides that an expedition to Egypt was contemplated. The plains of the Houran, already severely drained to supply the standing armies of the Sultan in his unwearying war against the Franks, were threatened with new impositions. The Arab tribes might be summoned to join the Sultan's forces, and their camels be compelled into long and painful convoys towards the frontiers; or should the Viceroy, as was not improbable, repel the invasion and bear back the tide of battle to the walls of Damascus, they would be placed in a situation of doubt and difficulty, and at all events have to bear the entire burden of supporting the contending parties.

Under these circumstances, and probably wearied of a residence which exposed them to unceasing contributions, and left them no certainty as to whether they should reap what they sowed, the Shehaabs determined on a removal. The Emir Munkid, assembled all the Emirs of the family and their dependants. He explained to his tribe the unfortunate relations which existed between Nouradeen and Saladin, recalled to them that the latter was their friend and had been frequently their guest, that the

contest was one in which they could have no personal interest, but of which the entire burden would, in all probability, have to fall upon themselves; that whichever side was successful, the Houran would inevitably be ravaged, and its flocks and herds carried off, and concluded by counselling the painful yet unavoidable alternative, of leaving a country where they had no longer any security, and where they were subject to perpetual harassings and vexations.

The tribe had anticipated the wishes of their chief. Within a very few hours the horsemen and camels had all assembled. But the departure of entire families from a spot which their ancestors had inhabited for five centuries, where the tent had long been exchanged for the substantial and well-built house; where, in fact, had been erected a large and capacious town, that of Shohba, was an affair of greater difficulty. Many days also elapsed before the numerous flocks could all be gathered in from their extensive ranges. At length the arrangements were complete. The camp, consisting of fifteen thousand souls, moved on in the direction of the lake of Tiberias, and by slow and easy marches,

arrived at the heights overhanging the Bridge of Jacob, on the river Jordan.

Nouradeen informed of this sudden evacuation of the Houran, sent messengers without delay, to ascertain the causes of so sudden a movement, and with orders to use every possible means of persuasion to induce the Shehaabs to return. On their replying that their determination was unchangeable, he sent them fresh emissaries with pelisses of honour for the Emirs, and various presents for their wives and children. Pretty accurately divining the reasons which induced them to take so extraordinary a step, as that of utterly and for ever abandoning the home of their forefathers, he wrote the Emir Munkid a most flattering and impressive letter, in which he promised that if they returned they should no longer be molested in any way whatever; and in the most solemn terms tendering him the assurance of his firm and unalterable friendship and protection.

The Emir sent a written reply to the effect, that the Sultan's gracious letter had been most gratefully received, that with regard to his assurance that if they returned they should dwell in peace,

they hoped wherever they went, to dwell in peace under his shadow and protection; that wherever they went, they should always look upon him as their lord and master, and be obedient to his orders; but as to a return to the Houran, they begged to be excused, because it had ceased to afford sustenance to their flocks and camels. In all other respects they were his devoted slaves. The Sultan not being in a position to use force, sent them a tardy permission to proceed.

After a slight delay on the banks of the Jordan, the entire tribe, led on by twelve Emirs and a force of nearly a thousand horsemen, well-armed and accoutred, crossed the Bridge of Jacob and turning towards the source of the river, advanced to Wady Tame.

Count Ora, the Frank governor of Hasbeya, alarmed at their approach, gathered together his garrison, and strengthened by a detachment from the castle of Shakeef, went out to give them battle. The Shehaabs, sending on their baggage and tents through the valley until they emerged on the plains of the Bekaa, assumed a defensive position with their effective force, on the undulating plains of

Merjyoom. The Franks, leaving the advantageous heights of Hasbeya, and despising the comparatively small numbers of their enemy, advanced upon them in full confidence of success. The Arab Emirs waited until they had crossed the Jordan, which at this point is but a rivulet, and as they were re-forming their ranks, made one decisive and effective charge. The Frank infantry retreated in confusion. Their cavalry, which with them was an auxiliary not a principal arm, did not even appear on the field; but having seen the sudden reverse of the day, kept at a safe and convenient distance in the rear.

Early on the following morning, a herald appeared from the Frank encampment, proposing that the fortunes of the day should be decided by single combat, and a warrior fully accoutred, accompanied by a numerous retinue, was seen slowly descending towards the bridge of the Jordan. The Emir Nejm, son of the Emir Munkid, at once accepted the challenge. The only convenient spot for the rencontre was a small plain on the right side of the river, at present occupied by the Khan Merjyoom, where an annual fair is held to this

day. The Frank forces being on the left bank, their champion had the preliminary disadvantage of being obliged to cross over to the enemy's side. The Arabs, mounted on horses and camels, crowded down to the scene of battle, and stealthily took possession of the olive grove, which was in its immediate neighbourhood. On the signal being given, the two combatants rushed to the conflict. At one blow with his battle-axe the Frank broke his adversary's spear in two. The Arab Emir's chief weapon was gone. To attempt to prolong the fight by a sword attack against one who stood encased in iron, he felt would be both useless and dangerous; wheeling his steed therefore suddenly round, he sprung out of his saddle, and throwing himself bodily on his enemy, rolled with him to the ground. The struggle now assumed the appearance of a wrestling match. It was long and desperate; and the Frank, though clad in armour, might, from his superior size and strength, have gained the day, had not the Emir perceived, and by a sudden and dexterous movement, snatched the dagger from his adversary's girdle, and stabbed him with it in the groin.

The Arabs unable to conceal their joy, and wild with the ecstasy of triumph, rushed tumultuously on their foes. In an instant their horsemen dashed across the bridge. Their camels forded the river on either side, in one long and continuous line. But a severe trial awaited them. The wooded acclivities which arose abruptly from its banks, were thickly studded with the enemy's infantry, who poured on them a harassing and incessant fire of arrows. The Arabs on the camels could only remain on the defensive, but at the same time vigorously returned their enemy's fire. The Emirs, however, at once placed their cavalry, amounting to upwards of a thousand, in one single and compact column on the high road to Hasbeya, and heedless of the skirmishers which surrounded them, passed on steadily and gallantly until they drew up beneath the walls of the town. This movement was decisive, the enemy hastily abandoned their advanced positions, and fell back in every direction.

The evening of this eventful day found the Shehaabs assuming the attitude of a besieging force. Their loss had been severe, from the well-sped

arrows of the enemy; and to shelter themselves in some degree from the fire which would necessarily be directed against them from the ramparts, they spent the night in throwing up hasty but effectual entrenchments of loose stones and wood. The camels had come up, and their riders dismounting and leaving them in the charge of a few hands, mustered a reinforcement of more than fifteen hundred men, who assumed the tasks and duties of an infantry. The whole of the third day was spent in continual firing on both sides. At nightfall, however, the Arabs approaching the gates of the town, piled up against them an immense quantity of timber and brushwood, which they threatened to burn, unless the town surrendered. Count Ora, anticipating the progress of events, had hastily shut himself up in the fortress with five hundred chosen soldiers, and hoping to be able to abide the chances of a reinforcement, made no great difficulty in acceding to the demands of the Emir Munkid, that the Franks in the town should lay down their arms and leave the place.

The fortress was now closely invested. A coarse kind of battering-ram was brought to bear against

its gates. Hillocks of large stones were gradually raised in three different places against the walls, until they reached the level of the ramparts. The Arabs, encouraged by their Emirs, cheerfully encountered the fatigues and dangers of these, to them, novel operations, until, on the tenth day, the enemy fondly expecting relief from without, and obstinately refusing to listen to any terms, the place was carried by storm, and the entire garrison, with their leader, put to the sword (A.D. 1171).

The Emir sent their heads as a trophy to Nouradeen, who warmly felicitated him on so important an achievement, and sent the principal officer of his own household with presents of pelisses, and other tokens of honour, for all the Emirs of his family. By a special firman, he was appointed Governor of Hasbeya and all the lands adjacent,—a dignity which has more or less remained hereditary in the family of Shehaab, up to the present day.

The sensation created by this exploit in the ranks of Islamism must have been considerable, for three years afterwards, when the victorious Saladin assumed in person the government of

Syria, at Damascus, he hastened to send letters of congratulation, marks of honour, and confirmatory titles of government to the Emir Munkid. In the Lebanon, the news of this signal blow given to the Frank cause, was received by its Mahommedan population with extravagant marks of rejoicing.

The House of Maan was at this period one of the reigning feudal houses in those mountains. The Emir Yoonis Maan sent messengers and letters to the Emir Munkid Shehaab, complimenting him in the most flattering terms on his success, warmly welcoming his entrance into the mountain districts of Anti-Lebanon, and inviting him in pressing terms to attend at a grand entertainment which he was about to give in celebration of the event. The Emir gladly accepted an invitation which opened to him a prospect of cementing friendship and alliance with his neighbouring chieftains. Attended by a chosen escort of upwards of two thousand attendants, horse and foot, and accompanied by all the members of his family, he ascended the heights of the Lebanon, and proceeded to the place of rendezvous, at the source

of the river Barook. These clear and copious springs, still esteemed amongst the coolest and most salubrious in the whole mountain range, ooze almost imperceptibly out of the ground at the head of a small plain, entirely encircled with hills bare and destitute of verdure. The climate, however, is most healthy; the air in summer delicious.

The word Barook, in Arabic, means "kneeling," and the name thus acquired by the river and the neighbouring village commemorates that it was on this spot the camels of the Arabs first "knelt" on their entering into these districts.

The Maans approached from Deir el Kammar and Bakleen, the places of their abode, with all the pomp and retinue necessary to impress on their guests a favourable impression of their wealth and power. The meeting took place amidst the most laboured and extravagant marks of rejoicing. Three whole days were spent in continual displays of horsemanship; the game of the jereed which so strongly taxes the strength of both horse and rider, was kept up by alternate parties in rapid succession with unflagging ardour, none conde-

scending to complain of fatigue; war songs were spontaneously composed and sung to the strains of Arab music applicable to the occasion. The feasting was profuse and lavish. On the second day, an incident occurred which gave a singular interest to the proceedings.

It had been intimated to the Shehaabs, that a nuptial alliance with the Maans would be a worthy consummation of their newly-sprung-up friendship and intimacy, and one which the latter were even ready to forward and promote. The daughter of the Emir Yoonis Maan was described to be in every way worthy of a suitor's regard. Scarcely fourteen, that age so captivating to the Eastern taste, beautiful, and giving promise of all those domestic amiabilities so necessary to the life of the harem. Her name was Tyiby, which is the Arabic expression for "good." It was resolved, that the Emir Mahommed, son of the Emir Munkid, should sue for her hand. Circumstances occurred which accelerated, and probably changed, the contemplated mode of proposal.

At the festive board, the Emir Yoonis Maan, performing an act which, in Oriental manners, is a

distinguished mark of honour and politeness, took a piece of meat between his fingers, and presented it to the Emir Mahommed, who sat next to him, saying to him at the same time, "Enti tyib," or "You are good." The Emir promptly and happily retorted, "If I am good, I should have the good." The play upon the words was at once perceived, and the hint cordially and pleasantly taken. "So be it, Mahommed," said the Emir Yoonis, "the good shall be given to you." The happy suitor immediately rose and kissed the hands of his host, in grateful acknowledgment; and this act of homage and obeisance being graciously accepted, was a proof to the assembled guests, that the family compact was completed. The usual presents sent by the Easterns to their affianced as marks of their intended constancy and good faith, were speedily tendered; and, after another day's repeated, and, it may be imagined, increased rejoicings, the entertainment concluded, and both parties returned gratified and delighted, to their respective homes.

The full consequences of this alliance were not experienced by the Shehaabs until five hundred years afterwards, when, on the extinction of the

House of Maan, they were called to the government of the Lebanon.

The Franks more than once endeavoured to regain Hasbeya, but without success. On the invasion of the Mogul Tartars, about the end of the thirteenth century, the Shehaabs were summoned to assist in the defence of Syria. The Emir Turcomas advanced with a corps of four thousand men, and defeated one of their bodies near Homs. The Moguls, however, reaped a terrible revenge a few years afterwards. The Emir Saad suddenly found himself surrounded by their forces (A.D. 1287), which had inundated Wady Tame, and the whole district of Hasbeya. He felt that to shut himself up in the castle before such superior numbers, would be merely to ensure ultimate defeat and inevitable death. Hastily sending the whole of his harem into the Shoof, the residence of the Maans, he determined to summon all his men, and take the field. To select a position was impossible. The mountains on every side presented so many living streams of human beings, rushing like wolves on their prey.

His only chance of escape was to cut his way

through them. Surrounded by his faithful followers, he stood for hours like a deer at bay. Numbers fell by his side under the tempestuous hail of arrows which assailed them. The bloodhounds were fast closing in. Assuming, without further delay, the offensive, and rallying each other to the combat, the Shehaabs, by a series of vigorous and desperate charges, clove their way through the torrent which opposed them, and succeeded in reaching the plains of the Bekaa. Their loss had been dreadful. Most of the Emirs, together with seven hundred men, had been slain, four hundred wounded. The Maans were rushing to their rescue. But the bloody tragedy had been enacted; while volumes of flame and smoke, rising the whole length and breadth of Wady Tame, told too clearly that the work of ravage was enacting. The Emir Saad, covered with wounds, and leading the shattered relics of his gallant band, ascended the Lebanon, and met the Emir Ali Maan, on the banks of the Suffa. Here they reposed until the storm had blown over.

The Emir and his clan then returned to Hasbeya. They rebuilt the town and castle; but the

entire valley remained for five years a scorched and barren wilderness. It is not surprising, after this terrible experience, that when Tamerlane made his appearance at Damascus, and paved its bazaars with human heads, pounding them into the ground with sportive charges of cavalry,* that the Shehaabs effected a rapid retreat into the most remote defences of their feudal colleagues in the Lebanon. That illustrious hero, however, spared them the horrors of a visit. It is not necessary at present to pursue their history any further. They were among the first to rally to the standard of Sultan Selim, in the Turkish invasion of 1520, and were confirmed by that monarch in the government of Hasbeya and Rasheya. The Mussulman branch of their family is still intrusted with the administration of these districts.

The principal proprietor in the village of Baabda is the Emir Milheim, as he is the most influential of the family of Shehaab. It consists of houses entirely his property, and has gradually assumed its present size by a very simple arrangement. He gives a piece of ground, gratis, to any person wishing

* Arab manuscript, containing an account of the taking of Damascus by Tamerlane.

to build on his estate. The new occupant builds at his own expense. But a contract is previously entered into between the two parties, to the effect that should the latter desire at any time to leave, or should the former give notice to quit, the Emir is bound, after a fair valuation, to pay over to the party leaving the full cost and value of the buildings which he has erected. If ground has been brought into cultivation, its increased value is also taken into consideration and paid for.

The relation thus established is that of landlord and tenant. There is no immediate gain to the Emir in the way of income, but the buildings on his property increase, his retainers multiply, his consequence augments, and he remains virtually proprietor of all improvements. The tenant, on the other hand, having made a considerable outlay to effect a settling, is cautious of giving offence to a landlord who has the power of turning him out whenever he chooses.

Near Baabda is the Wady Shahroor. This agreeable valley was laid out into mulberry plantations by the Emirs of the House of Shehaab, about a century ago. Its sheltered position, and the abundance of its waters tend to render it peculiarly

suited to the growth of oranges, lemons, and bananas, and its grounds have accordingly, of late years, been laid out in gardens appropriated to the production of these fruits. They are farmed out at rates varying from twenty pounds to seventy pounds a-year, and form the principal source of revenue to the Emirs now residing there. The necessities of these Emirs having compelled them to sell the better portion of their estates, the valley is now occupied by a small class of proprietors, formerly their tenants and vassals, but now independent; and a village of considerable extent has already sprung up.

The foolish pride of the aristocracy of the Lebanon makes them look upon any useful occupation as degrading to their rank and station. The idea of an Emir entering into any mercantile or professional pursuit, is too humiliating to be entertained for a moment, and they are ready to make any shifts for existence, rather than infringe so baneful a prejudice. The consequences of such a line of conduct, if persevered in, must inevitably be felt by many of the Emirs of the House of Shehaab, in their gradual descent, from the continued division of property, to the station of peasants.

The Ayoob Emirs of Ras-en-Hash have long been examples of the impoverishing and deteriorating results of such unmanly principles.

The family of Shehaab intermarries only with that of Bilemma. The Emirs of both families who are present at a marriage, make donations in money to the bride, and she on her part, a few days afterwards, sends to each Emir some article of dress, and in some cases, an entire suit of clothes. The pernicious effects of that priestly influence and dominion which in the latter years of the Emir Bechir's government threatened to introduce the spirit of Rome into the Lebanon, and which, had not the political ascendency of the Shehaabs been fortunately prostrated, and their career cut short, would no doubt have gradually developed itself in the most odious forms of persecution, may be seen even amidst the fallen fortunes of their House.

The magic "power of the keys" is wielded amongst them by the Maronite priests, to whom they humbly bow, with a skill and perseverance which have succeeded in making them the tame and unsuspecting victims of a system of plunder which, with Heaven as its watchword, conducts them into the inextricable mazes of a spiritual

despotism, whose cravings nought can satisfy but an unconditional surrender of worldly goods to the equitable and disinterested adjustment of these successors of the Apostles! A father confessor will occasionally emerge from the awful closet, possessor of an extensive mulberry ground, or of a luxuriant garden. But such a token of penitence is nothing as compared with the holy zeal and anxious desire for celestial rewards, which is occasionally manifested in the testamentary dispositions of the princes and princesses of the House of Shehaab.

The latest instance is that of the widow of the Emir Emeen, who left her whole monied and landed property, together with a most valuable collection of diamonds, to a Maronite Bishop, to be disposed of as he pleased, esteeming his claim superior to those of her nearest relations.

Pride, on the one hand, and superstition on the other, cannot fail, ere long, of reducing this once powerful and flourishing family to comparative penury and insignificance.

Ascending the mountains from Wady Shahroor one enters the districts occupied by the Druses. The first Macaata in this direction is that of the Upper Ghurb.

CHAPTER VII.

The *Upper Ghurb* is under the jurisdiction of the Druse House of Talhook. This family, originally the Beni Hazamm, one of the tribes which occupied the plains of the Houran, followed the fortunes of the House of Shehaab, and were raised by them to their present rank and position. A long residence in the Wady Tame, near Hasbeya, brought them into contact with, and finally allied them in creed, to the sect of the Druses. The villages of Heittat and Allaye are the principal residences of its Sheiks; the former under Sheik Hosein, the latter under Sheik Mahmoud.

Sheik Hosein Talhook is in every respect one of the most remarkable of the Druse Sheiks. Taking part, while yet a mere youth, in the expedition of

Abdallah, Pacha of Acre, and the Emir Bechir, against the Pashalik of Damascus, he signalized his first appearance on the field of battle at Il Mezzi, A.D. 1821, by deserting the standard of his patron and passing over to the enemy. Wounded and taken prisoner the very day after his treason, he was brought into the presence of the Emir, expecting nothing less than summary execution. Magnanimously treating his conduct as a mere boyish act of folly and indiscretion, the Emir, after a slight reprimand, gave him leave to return to his home, making him at the same time a present of money and clothes. This act of kindness was never forgotten by the Sheik, and he and his family, from that day forward, ever remained firm to the cause of the Emir Bechir, throughout all the changes of his eventful career.

Artful, sagacious, and eloquent, Sheik Hosein Talhook has acquired an influence and reputation amongst the Druses which render him a very useful coadjutor in the system of government now established in the Lebanon. Gifted with the most insinuating manners, he manages by the mere force of address, to reconcile the most hostile parties,

and to surmount all obstacles which may threaten the union and good understanding of his feudal colleagues; while his popularity with the Christians under his immediate sway, is based upon his well-known and often evinced clemency and forbearance in war, and his strict impartiality and sense of justice in all matters connected with their welfare in time of peace. Like many men of talent who have no decided position in the political world, he is a theorist, and too apt to prostrate his abilities in vain attempts to realize his projects of legislative perfection in the affairs of the mountain: though not originating, too hastily perhaps lending himself to the work of intrigue, if promising the realization of his views.

Yet were this Sheik to be once placed in a responsible situation of trust and power, his clearness of judgment, and impartiality of purpose, would render him a very valuable administrative officer; while his long-tried experience, his thorough knowledge and appreciation of the general character of his countrymen, of whatever creed or sect, combined with his more than ordinary powers of tact and penetration, would afford a tolerable

guarantee for the maintenance of right and justice. The power of the executive in the Lebanon, in whosesoever hands it may be placed, must always remain a nullity, so long as the Turkish government finds itself in the strange position of being obliged, in order to conciliate the European powers, ostensibly to approve of and support a system which it secretly wishes to subvert and overthrow. There is however no alternative, for were the Turks suffered to carry out their own plans, the country would be ruined.

The Beni Hazamm on their first coming to the Lebanon, settled at El Fejaneea, a little above Shwyfat, and gradually obtained possessions in the plains of Beyrout, where many years ago they had very extensive mulberry grounds. During the capricious sway of Djezzar and Abdallah Pasha, most of these were sold by the Sheiks Talhook, who preferring the greater security which existed within the jurisdiction of the Emirs of the House of Shehaab, extended their properties in the Upper Ghurb, of which district they are now the Macaatagees. About an hour into the interior from Heittat, is the village of Bisoor, originally founded

by the Emir Zanadeen Tnooh, surnamed the Cadi or Judge, from his legal lore and acquirements.

It was this Emir who built the bridge over the river Suffa, which flows in a deep ravine towards Sidon, between the districts of the Shahaar and the Manaasif, known to this day as the Djsr il Cadi, or Bridge of the Cadi.

The circumstances attending its erection are highly characteristic of that purity of mind, and strictness of moral principle, which, it must be admitted, most honourably distinguishes a sincere and consistent Druse Ockal. The Emir Zanadeen was one day superintending the construction of a mill on the river Suffa, when a peasant-girl happened to have occasion to cross it, on her way to Deir el Kammar. The more than usual roughness of the waves obliged her to expose her person in a way which became the subject of ribaldry to the labourers hard by. The Emir, indignant at this breach of propriety, immediately ordered them to leave off working at the mill, assembled as many additional hands as he could collect, pitched his tent on the spot, and never left the place until, at the expiration of forty-one days, a substantial bridge was erected.

The House of Cadi took its origin from this Emir, who married a daughter of the famous Druse Ockal Said Abdallah. It is now represented by Sheik Abdallah il Cadi, who resides at Bisoor. Here also is a branch of the Talhooks. The aged Sheik Hottar Talhook contributed in no slight degree during the earlier stages of his career, by the wisdom and the prudence of his counsels, to keep his party firm to the cause of the Emir Bechir Shehaab, at times when that prince was a fugitive in the Houran, or an exile at Cairo; and to this day, he retains a repose of manners and a quietness of demeanour which betoken the tone and habits of a diplomatist rather than a warrior.

His son Sheik Bechir, is one of the best informed of the Druse Sheiks, and has acquired a store of history and literature, which makes his conversation in every way superior. He has, for some years, devoted his time, singular as it may appear, to the cultivation of magic, and the stories he relates of his interviews with immaterial beings are novel and startling.

At times he will place a jug between the hands of two persons sitting opposite to each other, when

after the recital of certain passages taken indiscriminately from the Koran and the Psalms of David, it will move spontaneously round, to the astonishment of the holders. A stick, at his bidding, will proceed unaided from one end of a room to the other. A new Testament, suspended to a key by a piece of string, will in the same way turn violently round of itself. On two earthenware jars being placed in opposite corners of a room, one being empty the other filled with water, the empty jar will, on the recital of certain passages, move across the room; the jar full of water will rise of itself on the approach of its companion, and empty its contents into it, the latter returning to its place in the same manner that it came. An egg boiling in the saucepan, will be seen to spring suddenly out of the water and be carried to a considerable distance. A double-locked door will unlock itself. There cannot be a doubt that an unseen influence of some kind is called into operation, but of what nature those may conjecture who like to speculate upon such matters.

But it is in the more serious cases of disease or lunacy that his supernaturally-derived powers are

called into play. Previous to undertaking a cure, he shuts himself up in a darkened room and devotes his time to prayer and fasting. Fifteen and sometimes thirty days are passed in this state of abstinence and self-denial. At last, one of the genii, described by him to be much of the same appearance as human beings, will suddenly appear before him and demand his bidding. He then states his position, and requires assistance in the case he is about to undertake. The genii replies at once, that his request is granted, and encourages him to proceed.

The wife of Sheik Achmet Talhook had been for more than two years afflicted with a swelling which had been long mistaken for pregnancy. Sheik Bechir, after the usual preparatory discipline, passed his hand over her person, and in five minutes, she arose perfectly cured. Sheik Yoosuf Talhook was brought before him a confirmed lunatic; in two days he returned to his home perfectly restored in health and reason.

That the Sheik stoutly maintains his intercourse with spiritual agents to be real and effective, is unquestionable; and indeed the belief in magic, and in

the interposition of an order of unseen creatures in worldly affairs, at the bidding of those who choose to devote themselves earnestly to such intercourse, is universal throughout the entire population, of every religion and sect. There are Christian priests who affirm that the Psalms of David contain an extensive series of necromantic passages, which if thoroughly understood and properly treated, would place the whole world of spirits entirely at man's disposal, and invest them, through their medium, with miraculous powers.

Instances could be multiplied in which the most extraordinary and unaccountable results have been brought about, by the intervention of individuals who make this communion the subject of their study and contemplation. But as the ears of Europeans could only be shocked by assertions and statements which they would not fail of holding to be utterly fabulous and ridiculous, the subject is merely alluded to in these pages to indicate the existence of a very prominent and prevalent belief in the Lebanon.

The great majority of Christians in the Upper Ghurb are of the Greek Church, the scattered

remnants of the Greek empire. Many of them had formerly settled in the Houran and plains adjacent, and were encouraged to come to the Lebanon by the Arab tribes, from their superior knowledge in the art of building and other trades. To this day, indeed, there are Arabs in the Houran of the Greek persuasion. Mixed as they are with the Druses, and under the feudal dominion of the Druse Sheiks, they naturally live with them on a footing of perfect harmony and friendship; and in the late civil war between the Druses and Maronites, joined cordially with the former. A spirit of sectarian animosity entered largely also into their feelings on that occasion; for such is the infatuated bigotry of the Maronite priests, that they tell their people, that of the two, attending prayers in the Mahommedan mosque would be more pardonable than taking part in the service of the Greek Church. Both the Greeks and the Greek Catholics have their convents in these parts. Immediately behind the Upper Ghurb, and divided from it by a valley of some five miles in length, with villages on either side, is the

Joord, the Macaata of the House of Abdelmelik.

These Sheiks, whose principal residence is Ebtater, trace back their origin to the Beni Shweizam, one of the tribes who accompanied the Tnoohs in their emigration from Aleppo to the Lebanon. The most remarkable village on the Joord, is Rashmeya, exclusively Maronite, and under the immediate jurisdiction of the Maronite Sheiks of the House of Houri. Their influence is of course merely nominal, except as landed proprietors, nor indeed, surrounded as they are by Druses, is it to be supposed that their political position can be of the slightest importance. In this district there are likewise three Maronite convents.

The Maronites came into the Druse mountains upwards of two centuries ago; many families at that time seeking protection under the equitable and tolerant government of the Maans, from the tyranny and oppression of the Mahommedan rulers of Djebail and Batroon, which were then in the power of the House of Safa and that of Assaff. The Abdelmeliks are celebrated for their breed of mares, which are powerful, swift, and well adapted to the rugged roads of the mountains, which from their muscle and bone, they traverse for days continuously with-

out fatigue, and with a remarkable firmness and security of tread, both in ascent and descent. They never cross a breed, being always very particular that both sire and dam be of the same stock and pedigree.

Hamdoon, a considerable village at about an hour's distance from Ebtater, is one of the summer residences of the American Missionaries, and a considerable Protestant congregation has arisen there, under the predication of the Rev. Eli Smith. Immediately adjacent to the Upper Ghurb, in a southerly direction, is the district of

Il Shahaar, of which the most conspicuous village is Abeigh. Commanding a delightful view of the lower ranges of the mountain and of the sea, with a most salubrious climate and excellent water, it is not surprising that this spot should have been selected by the Tnoohs, as their favourite place of abode. Here, for upwards of seven centuries, this great Arab tribe maintained an uninterrupted sway over the surrounding country, and acquired that strength and importance which made them courted by the monarchs both of Egypt and Syria. The ascendency of the Druses under their lead and

guidance, produced the most beneficial effects, and the Christians must involuntarily confess that their ancestors ever found under the Tnooh Emirs a toleration and security which they would in vain have looked for in any other portion of the Mahommedan dominions.

Some years after the extinction of the House of Tnooh in the seventeenth century, the Shehaabs built some substantial edifices out of the castles which had belonged to their predecessors, and continued in possession until driven out by the Druses in the civil war of 1845. Besieged in their palaces during this contest by an overwhelming power of Druses, headed by some of their most distinguished Sheiks, the Shehaab Emirs with their dependents, defended themselves with desperate gallantry, but would nevertheless have been finally compelled to surrender at discretion (when their fate would have been massacre), had not news reached their adversaries, in the midst of the combat, that the Druses were over-matched and menaced with defeat in the Metten.

With that promptness and decision which ever mark their military movements, the Druse Sheiks,

in order to make their numbers assembled at Abeigh immediately available for the purpose of relief to the quarter menaced, sued their vanquished enemies for peace, and applied to the Rev. Mr. Thomson, one of the American missionaries residing in that village, to be the bearer of a flag of truce. The mission was at once accepted and bravely executed by the reverend gentleman, who, at the hazard of his life, interposed between the combatants and brought them to terms. The Shehaabs were to lay down their arms and have free egress.

The Emirs, with their wives and children, took the direction of Sidon, and had advanced some distance in that direction, when Colonel Rose, her Majesty's Consul-general, overtook them, and engaged them to turn their steps towards Beyrout; and fortunate indeed for them was this timely interposition, for a body of Druses was lying in wait for them at some distance on the Sidon road, by whom they would inevitably have been robbed and plundered, if, indeed, no more serious atrocities had been committed on their persons. Colonel Rose, taking compassion on the desolate and forlorn condition of the Shehaab

princesses, ordered all his horses to be placed at their disposal, and, making his whole suite of Cawasses and attendants dismount, he himself set the example by walking on foot by the side of the ladies the entire way to Beyrout, a distance of six or seven hours, and over various out-of-the-way roads of extreme ruggedness and difficulty.

Abeigh seems likely once more to rise into considerable importance. The Druses appear anxious to re-invest it by their presence, especially since the departure of the Shehaabs, with a portion of its wonted celebrity. For various reasons, it is a place which excites in their breasts feelings of love and veneration. It was the seat of their former greatness. It contains the ashes of Said Abdallah Tnooh, the sainted Ockal who was the boast and glory of the Unitarians, and to whose shrine they come in votive pilgrimage, in the hopes of propitiating the Deity by such a mark of reverence to his favoured and exalted servant.

Here the Sheiks of the House of Ameenadeen, despising the attainment of political power, have long devoted themselves hereditarily to the study and practice of the doctrines of the Druse religion.

Sheik Nohman Jumblatt, throwing up the cares and responsibilities of a principality, has lately settled at Abeigh, pursuing the quiet and secluded life of an Ockal in its congenial atmosphere. The house of Abou Nekad, no longer permitted access to Deir el Kammar, once the place of their feudal pomp and pride, have transferred thither the seat of their jurisdiction, and are erecting a strong and capacious mansion. But there are other reasons which at present must conspire to render it, at least in the estimation of the Protestant world, a place of more than ordinary interest and importance.

CHAPTER VIII.

At Abeigh there is a branch of the "Mission to Syria and the Holy Land," commenced nearly thirty years ago by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. This society was the first in modern times to undertake the work of reviving evangelical Christianity in this country. They sent an exploring Mission to Palestine and Syria as early as the year 1821. The Mission may be said to have been established in 1823, by the settlement of two married missionaries at Beyrout. In the year 1827 they were joined by a third missionary, the Rev. Eli Smith, who still remains connected with the mission. Beyrout as it is the oldest, so it has always been the principal station occupied by this mission. Here is their

principal congregation. Here also is their printing establishment, which has issued many valuable books in the Arabic language. Some of these books are elementary scientific works, but most of them are of a religious character. The mission are preparing a new translation of the Bible into Arabic, from the original Hebrew and Greek.

From Beyrout, the missionaries gradually extended their operations into Mount Lebanon, southward to Jerusalem, northward to Aleppo, and north-eastward as far as Mosul on the Tigris. They have now (1853) six stations, namely, Beyrout, Abeigh, Sidon, Tripoli, Aleppo, and Mosul. The station at Sidon has, under its care, an important congregation at Hasbeya, where, a few years ago, a respectable body of people seceded from the Greek Church, and after years of severe persecution, were at length recognised by the government as a distinct Protestant community. These six stations at present constitute the Society's mission to the people, speaking the Arabic language. Besides these, there is an important station at Aintab, in Northern Syria, for the benefit of the Armenians. That station, however,

is a branch of another mission of the same Society, called the Mission to the Armenians, whose seat is at Constantinople.

In connection with these six stations, there are twelve ordained missionaries, two of whom are also medical men, besides one physician who is not a clergyman, and one printer. All of these, except one, are married men.

Prohibited by a well-known cause, from directly attempting the conversion of Mohammedans, full liberty is nevertheless allowed them for evangelical labours, among all the Christian sects throughout the Turkish empire. The nominally Christian communities, constitute a large part of the population of Syria, and it is mainly to these that the operations of the missionaries are directed. The ignorance and superstition that prevail in these communities, and the distance to which they have departed from the spirit of true Christianity, render the work of enlightening and elevating them, as timely and as necessary as was the enterprise of Luther and his coadjutors in the sixteenth century.

The course pursued by the missionaries, is a

simple and unostentatious one. As soon as they acquire the language, which is itself a work of years, they make it their leading object to inculcate the truths of the Gospel, impressing them upon the hearts and consciences of men, in public and in private, as they have opportunity. This object is prosecuted in various ways, as for example, by the education of youth, by means of the press, as well as by public preaching and private conversation with the people.

The mission has under its care some fifteen free schools, embracing perhaps four hundred pupils, nearly one-fourth of whom are girls. The books used in these schools are exclusively those printed by the mission, and are of good moral and religious tendency. The teachers are well-informed natives, of good character, evangelical in their views, and most of them decidedly religious men.

Thousands have been taught in these schools to read and write, and thus a demand has been created for the valuable publications, that have been issued by the mission press at Beyrout. Many thousands of copies of the sacred Scriptures, and portions of the Scriptures in small volumes, besides many other

useful books, have been put in circulation in almost all parts of the country.

Besides the primary schools just mentioned, the mission has two schools of a higher character. One of these is a female boarding-school at Beyrout, in which a four years' course of study is pursued, under the instruction of one of the missionaries, assisted by several well-qualified teachers. The object of this school, is not only to improve the pupils in useful knowledge, but also to qualify them to teach others, and to prepare them for the duties of social and domestic life. The other high school referred to, is a seminary, or boarding-school, for young men.

This institution is at Abeigh. It comprises a four years' course of education. Besides what is strictly religious in the course of study, the pupils are instructed in history, in intellectual and moral science, in the higher branches of mathematics, with their practical application, and also in natural philosophy and chemistry. The main object of this institution, is the training up of native teachers and preachers of the Gospel. One important branch of their labours, and that which is regarded

by the missionaries as the most important of all, is the public preaching of the Gospel. It is true they have not at present large congregations; but they have at each of these six stations above named, and at an equal number of villages near them, stated preaching services on the Lord's-day. These services are conducted by the missionaries and their native assistants; the congregations in the different places, varying in numbers from six to one hundred, or one hundred and fifty. The aggregate number in these several congregations who regularly hear evangelical preachings, may be estimated at from four to five hundred persons. The major part of these profess Protestant views, though only a smaller portion of them are communicants in the evangelical church.

It is a principle with the missionaries, to receive as members of the church, those only who give evidence of piety. They have aimed, not so much to induce people to separate from their old churches and join the Protestants, as to make them intelligent, sincere, evangelical Christians. But when they become such, experience shows that they will not remain long in connexion with the Oriental

churches, be they Maronite, Greek, Greek Catholics, Armenian, or Syrian. Nor *can* they remain in their old churches if they would, for when people become enlightened, evangelical in doctrine and in practice, and begin to forsake the confessional, the mass, &c., they are at once liable to excommunication. They, therefore, naturally desire to withdraw from their old communion, and to be organized into separate evangelical churches, in which they can have the privileges and ordinances of a pure Christianity.

Accordingly, wherever there is a suitable number of enlightened Protestants giving evidence of sound conversion, by producing the fruits of piety in their lives, it is the policy of the missionaries to organize such persons into churches, with native deacons, and with native pastors also, if there are natives fitted for that office; if not, the missionaries themselves, for the time being, take the pastoral care of the infant churches.

There is a native evangelical church at Beyrout, consisting at the present time of thirty-one members. At Hasbeya there is another church, formed on the same principles with that at Beyrout, and

embracing (in March, 1852,) twenty-five members in communion. A third church has been organized at Mosul, containing at present ten members. At Aleppo, there is a small company of evangelical Christians, who will probably soon be organized into a similar church, making seventy or eighty persons in all, who are now communicants in the native evangelical churches connected with the mission. Besides these, a considerable number in different parts of the country are regarded as pious persons, though they have not yet connected themselves with these newly organized churches. A still larger number are more or less enlightened, and evangelical in their views.

The number of professed Protestants in Syria, it is not easy to state with exactness, inasmuch as no complete census has yet been taken. In Hasbeya, at the foot of Mount Hermon, there is a Protestant community, distinctly acknowledged and enrolled by the government, and embracing, it is supposed, not far from two hundred souls.

In Beyrout, and the parts of Lebanon adjacent, there are declared Protestants to the number, perhaps, of three hundred or more. There are

also professed Protestants in considerable numbers in Palestine.

But the success of the mission is not to be estimated solely by the number of church members, or by the number of declared Protestants now known. Their books and schools, their various public and private discussions, have had a wider influence. There are many, besides the classes of persons just referred to, whose minds are much enlightened, whose prejudices are weakened, and who acknowledge the Bible as the supreme authority, in matters of faith and practice.

Thus, in various ways, light and truth have been gradually but widely diffused, and an important work accomplished, preparatory to still further results, which may hereafter be looked for among the inhabitants of this interesting country.*

The direct influence of the American schools, publications, and religious services, on the public mind in the Lebanon, is sufficiently encouraging to warrant increased exertions, and to excite well-grounded hopes that the cause of evangelical truth

* The above observations were kindly supplied by a member of the Mission.

will at length be crowned with the most cheering success. The spirit of inquiry has been largely awakened. Copies of the Arabic Bible may be seen in most of the villages, in the Druse mountains, and the religious controversial discussions which are now so common, particularly amongst the lower orders, afford unquestionable evidence that they are anxious, whatever may be the result, to have reasons for the faith which is in them. Hundreds, though openly acknowledging the errors and unchristian practices of their Church, yet excuse themselves from an outward declaration, in favour of the purer tenets to which their consciences consent, on the plea of the difficulties of their position, and the disruption of family ties and relations, which would be consequent on their deviating from the usages and customs of their forefathers.

Such a state of feeling, however, cannot long exist in any Christian community, for it entails upon its possessors the painful necessity, of attending religious ceremonies which they regard as fictitious inventions, and submitting to practices which their enlightened understandings have learned to reject as vain and superstitious. And, indeed, a

very general opinion exists at this day, in the southern portion of the Lebanon—grounded, no doubt, on the remarkable tendencies of the people which have just been adverted to—that not many years will elapse, before Evangelical Protestantism will have reclaimed within its fold, provided the means for its organization be ample and complete, no inconsiderable portion of its Christian population.

Moreover, the disgraceful dissensions which exist in the Greek and Greek Catholic communities, tend greatly to alienate their flocks from a system of church government, which gives scope to irregularities, so utterly at variance with the commonest principles of decency and decorum.

The Greek Catholic bishop, in Beyrout, was lately violently assaulted at the altar by the Archbishop's party, while in the act of performing the sacred duties of his office, his robes torn from his back, and he himself driven ignominiously into the streets; while the scene of strife and contention was only put an end to, by the interference of the Turkish police. The contest for the vacant bishopric of the Greek Church, lately excited the

most violent animosities in the Lebanon, amongst the members of that sect; while the bribery and intrigues, resorted to by the candidates for the sacred office, ended in their both being summarily removed by higher authorities, from the scene of their malversations, and sent to Constantinople.

It may readily be supposed, that the contrast presented by the plain and harmonious procedures of the Evangelical Churches, founded by the American mission, must be deeply felt and candidly admitted, by those who are disposed to seek a remedy for such disorders.

Nor are the American missionaries themselves, unaware of the advantages of their position, in this respect. Conscious of the goodness of their cause, the purity of their doctrines, and the Apostolic simplicity of their ecclesiastical regulations, they avoid all theological disputes or open denunciations of error, and, in the literal sense of our Lord's injunctions, "preach the Gospel," leaving the consequences and effects to the operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby they have been called to the labours of the ministry.

In a country, however, where the heats and

prejudices of Christian sectarianism, are barely prevented from bursting forth into open warfare, by the restraining hand of a government which, perhaps fortunately, regards all such rivalries with indifference and contempt, it is not surprising that the rising influence of Protestantism should be regarded in many quarters, with feelings of bitterness and jealousy; and that, in the earlier stages of its appearance, attempts should have been made to take advantage of its undefined position in the Ottoman Empire, to attack and overthrow it, by force and intimidation.

And it must be allowed that its prospects on this score, were at one time discouraging. Representations, however, were made on the subject to Constantinople, where, through the zeal, perseverance, and address of the British Ambassador, (for it is needless to say that there were antagonist influences arrayed against him,) a firman was at length obtained from the Porte, in the year 1848, which secured to Protestantism in the East, that acknowledged standing and consideration, which will enable it henceforward to demand the intervention of the civil authorities,

if necessary, to protect its adherents from any illegal interference with their rites and ceremonies. The common sense and sound judgment evinced in this document, may be well contrasted with the ridiculous bigotry and intolerance displayed towards Protestants by some Christian governments, calling themselves civilized. It will be seen, moreover,* by a Vizierial letter, lately issued, on the occasion of some ill-treatment experienced by one of the Protestant communities in Palestine, that the Porte is determined to maintain the toleration it has promised, despite all the outcry and fanaticism of the Romish and Greek Churches.

The soil of the Shahaar is, like that of the Metten, remarkably sandy, and abounds in plantations of the fir. After a gradual descent from Abeigh to the Djsr il Cadi, one enters into the Manaasif.

* A copy of the Sultan's firman and of the Vizierial letter will be found in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IX.

The *Manaasif* has for its principal village, Deir el Kammar, which contains a mixed population, of Druses, Jews, and Christians, the Maronites prevailing in number amongst the latter. Formerly, it was the residence of the Druse House of Abou Nekad.

Originally, an Arab tribe in the empire of Morocco, the Beni Inkadd, joined their co-religionists in the Lebanon about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and rose to importance under the patronizing auspices of the Tnoohs. When the Shehaabs, on their being called to the government of the Lebanon, made Deir el Kammar the seat of their government, they found the Abou Nekads, notwithstanding an outward show of submission,

zealously endeavouring to keep up an independent, and almost rival authority.

Such was their political adroitness, combined with consummate daring, that they gradually succeeded in wresting from the Shehaabs, a full acknowledgment of their feudal power over the Shahaar and the Manaasif, and it required all the vigour and energy of the Emir Bechir, to bridle and subdue their untiring turbulence.

Sheik Naseef, the present head of the family, is called the "Sword of the Druses." Brave, restless, ambitious, his dogged firmness and dauntless bearing have procured him the admiration of his compatriots. On the fall of the Emir Bechir Shehaab, in 1840, he secretly meditated the restoration of the ascendency which his family had lost, during that prince's administration. The ostentatious vanity and overbearing insolence of the Emir Bechir Kassim, who had been named governor of the Lebanon, wounded him to the quick, and he laid a plan for enticing the Emir to a public conference on the plains of Sumkaneea, which, had not the latter been timely warned of the temerity of accepting such a proposal, would

inevitably have ended in his being put to death. The Druses fully participated in all the feelings of their chief, and stood ever watchful and ready to resent the slightest indications of assumed superiority on the part of the Maronites, who naturally felt encouraged and assured, by seeing the principal power still in the hands of one of their co-religionists.

The civil war which shortly afterwards broke out between the two parties, needs no further allusion at present, than to state, that one of the first victims in the desperate affray which ensued in the streets of Deir el Kammar, was the beloved son of Sheik Naseef Abou Nekad. On receiving the fatal news, the Sheik gave immediate orders that the Christians should receive no quarter, and an indiscriminate slaughter was the natural consequence.

Had this act of severity—unusual though it was, even in the sanguinary feuds to which the Lebanon had long been subject—been confined to those who were taken in the act of fighting, it might possibly have been forgotten in the hour of reconciliation. But when Sheik Naseef permitted

the violence of his resentment, to carry him so far beyond the bounds of policy and discretion, as to authorize the massacre of Christians whom he had induced, by assurances of peace, to lay down their arms; of men who were his own vassals, and who though differing in religion, had often shown their devotion to his person and family—an impression was made which could never be effaced; and the Maronites of Deir el Kammar, on the cessation of hostilities, declared that nothing would ever induce them to place themselves again, under the jurisdiction and authority of the House of Abou Nekad.

A Turkish governor was accordingly appointed over them, and the Nekads were finally dispossessed, not only of an important and flourishing town which had long been their feudal appanage, but also of the hereditary mansions of their ancestors, which are now falling to ruin and decay. Yet such was the boldness and audacity of Sheik Naseef, that when the second strife broke out between the Druses and Maronites, in the year 1845, he suddenly left the Houran, whither he had taken refuge, collected together an indiscri-

minate horde of Arabs, Kurds, Mussulmen, and Druses, and marching rapidly into the plains of the Bekaa, summoned the Sultan's subjects to his standard, by virtue of an Imperial Firman which he himself had forged, conferring on him the government of the Lebanon.

Deir el Kammar owes its rise and prosperity to the Shehaabs. It has a population of some 8000; and its principal manufacture is the Borsaly, or stuffs made of silk and cotton, which rival those of Damascus. The Emir Bechir Shehaab removed his residence from hence to a village immediately opposite, called Ebtedeen; and during the course of his long administration, spared neither labour nor expense to complete the palace which now stands there, a monument of his state, and almost regal magnificence. Its spacious quadrangles, its marble courts and fountains, its luxurious baths, the exquisite minuteness and richness of its mosaic—the walls of some of the rooms being entirely covered with patterns of that workmanship, displaying scenes of trees, animals, birds, and flowers, in grotesque yet harmonious profusion—bespeak the ambitious nature of the Emir's aspirations.

Around him likewise arose the palaces of his sons, each having a princely establishment, and supplied with unsparing lavishness. Indeed, it is well known, that he looked upon himself as the founder of a Dynasty, which should sway the Mountain with hereditary power.

Entering life at a period, when the destinies of the Lebanon were virtually in the hands of one of the most sanguinary and rapacious of that horde of Pashas, by whom the Turkish Government habitually ravaged and oppressed the fairest districts of its empire, the Emir Bechir at first showed no desire to enter into the political arena, and withheld himself from the allurements presented by the venality of those corrupt times. On being sent for by Djezzar, the famous governor of Acre, he refused to go, though well understanding that his presence at the Divan of that Pasha was intended to be a prelude to his individual advancement. And to his honour it must be said, that feelings of gratitude principally actuated his conduct on that occasion. His uncle, the Emir Yoosuf, the governor of the Lebanon, had protected and reared him like a son, and he felt repugnant

at being made instrumental to his overthrow and disgrace.

By whatever motives influenced, the Emir repeatedly advised his nephew to obey the summons. "I go," at length replied the young Bechir; "but remember, when I arrive at Acre I shall no longer be the son of Emir Yoosuf, but the son of Djezzar." With this impressive warning, which in no way seemed to affect his uncle, he took his departure from Deir el Kammar, and presented himself before the Turkish Mushir.

Djezzar, charmed with his manners, appearance, and address—for he was the most noble and majestic-looking prince of his day—soothed him with flatteries and caresses, loaded him with presents, and, after several weeks' most hospitable entertainment, gave him the Pelisse of Honour, made him Governor of the Lebanon, and placed under his orders 2000 men, to enable him to take possession of his newly acquired dignity. The gates of Acre were the Rubicon of his fortunes. He felt the magnitude of the career thus opened before him; but he knew it to be one bestrewed with uncertainties, difficulties, and dangers; one in which

public virtue, honour, good faith—all the better feelings of humanity—must, as occasion required, be unscrupulously set aside and overborne. He accepted the task, with all its conditions. How he fulfilled it, his history will tell.

His first step displayed an ominous vigour. Marching on Deir el Kammar, he gave his uncle battle, defeated him, and hanging on his steps with untiring activity, pursued him from post to post with triumphant success, until, despite a most resolute resistance, he drove him fairly out of the mountain. Rumours had, however, reached Djezzar, that the two Emirs had made common cause. The opportune arrival of two mule-loads of human heads from the camp of his young *protégé*, happily released his apprehensions on that score, as it must have amply assured him, that he had at last selected and employed a congenial spirit.

The principal events of his life will be sketched in the subsequent pages. Suffice it for the present to say, that it was not until after the battle of Sumkaneea, in the year 1821, in which he overthrew and defeated his rival, Sheik Bechir Jum-

blatt, that he became sole and undisturbed possessor of supreme power. If, in his progress to that eminence, he at times displayed a cunning and ferocity which throw a stain upon his character, it must be remembered, that he had men to deal with who would have turned clemency, consideration, and forbearance into weapons against himself, and unhesitatingly sacrificed him to their own passions and resentment.

Once engaged in the dark and tortuous struggle for ascendency, his only chance of success lay in fearlessly carrying out his own views and designs, without regarding either the means or the cost. The people of the Lebanon, it is true, felt the severity of his exactions, which were levied with unbending rigour. But he caused the awards of justice to be felt in the remotest corners of his principality. Crime was pursued with unrelenting severity, and the punishment of political victims, at times even barbarously cruel. The feeling of security which he established in the mountains, is to this day proverbial. No governor ever attended more assiduously or minutely to the wants and complaints of the people, or supported their claims with stricter impartiality.

He rose regularly two hours before sunrise, and sat on his divan smoking a pipe, completely alone, till daybreak. His attendants and secretaries shortly afterwards made their appearance, and he attended to business. The meanest peasant obtained an interview, and presented his petition, which would receive the Emir's immediate attention.

So complete was the mastery he had obtained over the turbulent feudatories of the Lebanon, and so strict the etiquette he exacted, that all the Emirs and Sheiks, both Druse and Christian, who came to pay him their respects, stood with folded arms before him until he invited them to be seated, and the invitation was even repeated three times before it was accepted. At the same time, he treated these chiefs with every possible courtesy and respect; rising to them on their appearance, and never withholding, even to individuals amongst them who were about to undergo the severest marks of his displeasure, those apparently trifling gestures and expressions of deference and civility, on which they place so much importance; so much so, that his good breeding almost atoned in their eyes for his tyranny.

The effect produced by his personal appearance was of itself sufficient to reduce, and often did reduce, the most rebellious spirit to abject submission. On entering the divan of audience, the first sight of the Emir acted on the beholder with the power of fascination. Apart in one of the remotest corners of the room, might be seen the figure of a venerable-looking man, in a kneeling position—sitting, in fact, on his heels—and reclining his back against a cushion, his temples encircled by the voluminous folds of a cashmere shawl; thick shaggy brows overhanging and partially concealing eyes replete with fire and vivacity; from one side of his girdle arose a dagger's head covered with the choicest diamonds, glittering amidst the silvery hairs of a broad massive beard which reached down to his waist, while thick fumes of tobacco, incessantly ascending from a bowl of extraordinary dimensions, and enveloping his whole person in a cloud, gave a mysteriousness to his presence which excited sensations of awe and terror.

The tone of his voice was deep, hollow, and sonorous. When angry, the hairs of his beard stood on end like a lion's mane. Few, if any, even

of the principal magnates of the mountain, could stand before him without trembling, which, however, as soon as he perceived, he used considerately to address them with some words of encouragement. Nevertheless, instances have been known of persons of rank, when seated with him at dinner, losing the power of swallowing; while all his guests used invariably to take merely a few hasty morsels and withdraw, anxious to escape from a state of embarrassment, which almost paralyzed the organs of nature.

His principal diversion was falconry, which he exercised in regal style. Every year, in the months of January and February, he used constantly to go out in great state, surrounded by Emirs and Sheiks, and the officers of his household, to the neighbouring mountains, and pitching his tent on an elevated spot commanding a view of various valleys, would spread his divan, and, with his suite and guests standing about him, smoke his pipe and pass his falcons in review before him, while the peasants, to the amount of 1500 or 2000, beat the woods in every direction.

As soon as a partridge or a covey was raised,

whatever might be the distance, the Emir cast his falcon, which, swift as an arrow, followed the bird, soared a minute, and then pouncing, brought it to the ground. Simultaneous with the casting of the falcon, fifty or sixty horsemen, accompanied by dogs, followed in the same line, to deprive it of its prey, of which they only gave it the head to eat. In this manner, the hills and vales of the Lebanon would be successively occupied for days together, presenting, by the variety of dresses and the costly accoutrements of the horses, a scene of richness and splendour peculiarly Eastern.

The Emir's household consisted of upwards of a thousand horse, which were in a constant state of employment, for the execution of his orders and the maintenance of regularity, in the various districts of the mountain. His hospitality was boundless; yet, though a lover of entertainment, and opening his stores to all comers with unsparing generosity, he was himself of singularly frugal habits. He only eat one meal a day, and that at twelve o'clock. At sunset, he was served with a small piece of bread and a little preserved fruit. His morals were scrupulously severe, not brooking

the mention even of irregularities, or of the slightest departure from the strict path of virtue and decorum.

He was twice married. His first wife, who was of the House of Shehaab, brought him a large family, and, in the last years of her life, which were deeply clouded by infirmities, she was solaced by his anxious and unceasing fondness and affection. In his second marriage, avoiding, from political motives which may be well understood, any matrimonial alliance in the mountain, he sent to Constantinople for three Circassian slaves. On their arrival, he selected the one that suited his taste, and gave orders that she should be instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. The favoured one rejected, with expressions of horror, all attempts to induce her to abandon the faith of Islam, in which she had been brought up. These unlooked-for scruples were reported to the Emir. "Take her to the kitchen," was his unconcerned reply. The choice of prospects thus laid before the young odalisk, wonderfully influenced and furthered the process of conversion; and the Maronite Bishop, who was especially charged with the care of her

spiritual interests, had ere long the gratification of announcing to the Emir that his pupil had been awakened to a sense of her religious errors. The Emir immediately conferred on her the name which she now bears, of "Husn Jahaan;" or, "Beauty of the World!" He abstained from all intercourse with her until she had been baptized, when his marriage was celebrated according to the rites of the Maronite Church. The ceremony was performed with the greatest secrecy, in a private chapel within the palace; for although he, as well as many members of his family, had been Christians for several years previously, they had never openly professed their change of creed; and various practices exacted by Mohammedanism, such as the minaret call to prayer, the fast of Ramadan, and the celebration of the feast of the Beiram, were rigidly enforced by the Emir Bechir at Ebtedeen, to the very last hour of his residence in the Lebanon.

CHAPTER X.

At a distance of three hours from Deir el Kammar, and divided from it by a wide and fertile valley, is the village of Bakleen, containing one of the principal Holowés of the Druses, and remarkable for the vestiges, which may still be seen there, of the once extensive palace of the House of Maan. It is the residence of the Druse Sheiks Ahmadi, a family raised to that rank by the Emir Bechir, as a reward for their valour in the battle of Sumkaneea, and perhaps also to counterbalance, in some degree, the power of the Abou Nekads. They acknowledge, as their suzerain, the head of the Druse House of Jumblatt, which rules over the Macaata of the

Shoof, in which Bakleen is situated. The manuscripts of the Druse religion, which are now in the Bibliothèque Royale, at Paris, were taken from

the house of the Chief Ockal of the Druses at Bakleen, Sheik Nusradeen, and presented to Louis XIV. by a Syrian doctor, named Nusrulla ibn Gilda, on the 15th July, 1700. These manuscripts comprise four folio volumes, containing seventy treatises, and are entitled, "Book of the Testimonies to the Mysteries of the Unity."* They were translated into French, by M. Petit de la Croix, the Royal Professor of Arabic.

There are other libraries which possess manuscripts of some portions of the Druse collection. The Library of the Vatican has a volume, the Imperial Library of Vienna has one, that of the University of Leyden two, while the Bodleian Library at Oxford has four. Two of the volumes in the Bodleian were brought from the East by Shaw, and are numbered 398 and 454. Fac-similies of them are in the Royal Library at Paris. The two other volumes, however, are nowhere else to be met with, being the only copies in Europe. The first of these volumes belongs incontestably to the Druse Collection; it contains pieces, many of

* This rare book is, in fact, to the Druses, what the Bible is to the Christians, and the Koran to the Mohammedans.

which are anonymous, but may with tolerable certainty be attributed to Moktana Bohaedeen. The latest date which is to be found among them, is the 26th year of Hamzé, 434 Hegira. The second is a manuscript composed of 170 leaves.

It has some curious details about the preaching of Hamzé, from the year 408 to 411, and on that of Moktana, which came to a close in the 26th year of Hamzé, or 434 Hegira. Mr. C. R. Pusey has given a short notice of this volume, in his work entitled, *Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum orientalium, biblioth. Bodleyanæ. Pars* 11. *Arabicos Complectens, p.* 568. The same volume contains, page 407, *seq.*, a detailed notice of the treatises contained in the three other Druse manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, which have already been alluded to.

Proceeding in a southerly direction from Ebtedeen, and leaving the heights of Bakleen on the right, one arrives in about an hour and a half at the plains of Sumkaneea, and the habitations of the Druse Sheiks, Abou Harmoosh. The spacious area here presented, and the existence of a copious spring, contribute to make this spot a favourite

place of assembly for the Great Chiefs of the Mountain, when any grave or important matters are to be discussed.

Situate in the valley of the river Barook, Muctara, the residence of the Druse House of Jumblatt, bursts on the view with striking effect, from some cliffs immediately in advance of Sumkaneea. Surrounded by large olive plantations, and standing on an eminence agreeably relieved by picturesque undulations of ground, it was once superior even to Ebtedeen, in the extent of its buildings, and the luxurious arrangement of its marble courts and baths.

On the fall of the Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, the Emir Bechir ruthlessly dismantled the mansion of his rival, threw down the best part of the edifice, and carried away all that was most rare and costly, to adorn and ornament his own palace. The present proprietor, Sheik Said Jumblatt, has in some degree redeemed the ravages effected on his extensive property, during a confiscation of nearly twenty years; and in the repair and reconstruction of the dilapidated ruins, which he found after the restoration of his family from exile, is emulating

the style and commodiousness of European architecture.

The Jumblatts came to the Lebanon, from Aleppo, about the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of Kurd origin, and descending from the great tribe of the Beni Ayoob, one of their ancestors was Governor of Cairo; and, indeed, one Arab historian gives him the title of Melik-il-Aadil Jumblatt, stating that he built a college called the Jumblateey, outside the Gate of Victory in that town, and that he was deposed after half a year's reign. Whether such a notice will justify them in claiming a royal origin or not, it is certain that the family was formerly one of considerable rank and importance, in Egypt.

The first mention which occurs of them, as connected more immediately with the affairs of Syria, is in the year 1613, when Ali Jumblatt Pasha, Governor of Aleppo, having resisted successfully certain demands on the part of the Sultan, marched with the Emir Fakaradeen Maan, and laid siege to Damascus, which only saved itself by timely ransom. Shortly afterwards, Ali Jumblatt fell by treachery, and his two sons, Jumblatt and Yesbeck, sought refuge with the Maans in the Shoof, where

they were entertained with the consideration due to their rank.

A century later found the descendants of these two brothers, respectively occupying the Shoof and the Arkoob; Sheik Ali Jumblatt having been chosen as their chief by the Druses of the former district, and confirmed in that post by the Emir Heider Shehaab, shortly before the battle of Aindara; while Sheik Amad, settling at Kafernebra and Barook with his brothers Serhal and Abou-adra, founded the present Druse House of Amad. The two families, in later times, engaged in one of those family feuds which were so common amongst the Mountain Chiefs, and gave origin to the two factions which still nominally exist, under the names of Jumblatt and Yesbeck.

It was reserved for the Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, the contemporary of the Emir Bechir Shehaab, to raise his House to a degree of wealth and importance, which rendered him for a time the most influential feudatory in the Lebanon. He made his fortune in the Bekaa.

Shortly after the conquest of Syria by Sultan Selim I., early in the sixteenth century, the greater

part of that valley was either partitioned amongst or sold, to some of the principal families of Damascus; many of whom possess to this day, unquestionable title-deeds confirming their territorial rights there. Its proximity, however, the richness of its soil, and the abundance of its harvests, rendered it too tempting, and indeed, too indispensable an object to the feudal proprietors of the Lebanon, not to be coveted, and not to render in their eyes any measures justifiable for its appropriation; so much so, that whether by bribes to the Turkish authorities, or by compromise with its local proprietors, they always contrived more or less to make its granaries available for their own uses.

But when the Turkish Government entered into that stage of decadence, which rendered it incapable of carrying out its own regulations, except by a system of falsehood, corruption, and treachery, which its functionaries to this hour study as a science, and practise with a dexterity and finesse, which might almost warrant the application of the celebrated conclusion, that "vice loses half its evil by losing all its grossness,"—the Mountain Chiefs frequently found themselves in a position to con-

vert their wishes into claims, and to menace where they were wont to temporize.

Without tracing, step by step, the progress of their aggressive conduct, as regards the cultivation of the Bekaa, suffice it to say that, some fifty years ago, the dissensions of the Pashas who ruled in Syria, their mutual hostilities, and their dependance on the good offices and support of the rulers of the Lebanon (who were frequently the arbiters of their destinies), placed the Emir Bechir Shehaab and his feudal colleagues in a position of such decided superiority, that they unscrupulously occupied all the villages of the Bekaa; and, after summarily relegating the greater part of their original proprietors, compelled them to accept of a nominal indemnity, which was yearly paid into the treasury of Damascus.

It was in these golden days, that Sheik Bechir Jumblatt, who alone had twenty-eight entire villages at his command, amassed those riches which enabled him to extend his dominions in the Shoof, to keep up a princely establishment, and to erect a palace at Muctara, which became a theme of admiration and a centre of attraction.

That political influence should have attended on such prosperity, was natural and becoming. Though the Emir Bechir, as belonging to the family of Shehaab, was invested with the title and insignia, such as they were, of Governor of the Lebanon, the practical authority was in the hands of the Druse Sheik. Nevertheless, no feelings of jealousy appeared to exist between them; on the contrary, their intimacy and friendship became proverbial. For years, the Sheik Bechir went almost daily from Muctara to Ebtedeen, to pay his respects to his liege, who would receive him with the most marked tokens of regard and consideration, and remain closeted with him in private council, for hours together. Circumstances, however, at length occurred, which, fatally for the Sheik, interrupted and destroyed these harmonious relations, and he ended his career in an ignominious death, within the walls of Acre, at the instigation of his former friend and ally.

Notwithstanding the lowness of its situation, encircled as it is by hills which exclude any very extensive prospect, the abundance of its waters, the picturesque banks of the river Barook, and the

rich verdure of its hanging gardens, conspire to make Muctara one of the most agreeable abodes in the Lebanon. The Sheik Bechir also, brought the appliances of Art to contribute to the bounties of Nature. At an immense cost, he made a canal, which conducted the waters of the Barook from a distance of several miles, to the very midst of his palace; an undertaking which was afterwards emulated by the Emir Bechir, who, in like manner, though at a less expense—for he forced the whole population of the mountain to contribute one day's gratuitous labour to the task—made the waters of the river Suffa available for the purpose of irrigation, to the extensive grounds of Ebtedeen and Deir el Kammar.

The Macaata of Sheik Said Jumblatt is the most important in the mountain, and, besides the Shoof, includes the four districts of, Akleem Jezeen, Akleem Tefah, Akleem Gharoob, and Djebel Reehan, inhabited by a mixed population of Christians, Druses, and Mussulmen, and extending to the plains of Sidon. Independent of the influence which accrues to them from such a wide jurisdiction, the House of Jumblatt rallies several minor

feudatories round its standard. The Mukadameen of Hamana, the Druse clans of Abou Harmoosh, Eid, Ameenadeen, and Shums, the latter occupying the western ranges of the Anti-Lebanon, below Hasbeya and Rasheya, are called the Jumblateey; and, in all matters of political import, lend the aid of their counsels and their arms to their feudal chief.

Arkoob. This Macaata is divided into the upper and lower; the former under the Sheiks Eid, the latter under the House of Amad, whose origin has already been described. The Amads are the head of the Yesbecky, in which party are comprised the Abdelmeliks and Talhooks, with whom they are allied by ties of blood as well as interest, these three families intermarrying exclusively with each other. The Amads occupy Kafernebra and Barook, and form, in their fortunes, a striking contrast to the Jumblatts, their kinsmen by hereditary descent.

While the latter are large landed proprietors, the former live mostly by their swords. With no regular means of existence worthy of notice, these Sheiks make free quarters on the inhabitants of their Macaata, as necessity suggests; nor can the

government, constituted as it now is, in the slightest degree control these irregularities. When short of money or provisions, they will summon their retainers, march on a village, and not move from it until a stipulated sum has been collected, and the necessary forage has been amply supplied. At times, with dauntless effrontery, they will make a descent on the Bekaa, lay an embargo on the threshing-floors, and in presence of the affrighted peasants, who dare not offer even a semblance of resistance, carry off several loads of corn and barley to their mountain homes.

With the propensities, they have the characteristic qualities of bandits. Fond of display, and choice in their arms and accoutrements, their chief aim is to excel in feats of horsemanship, to hurl the jereed with superior force and skill, and to strike a mark with unerring aim, sometimes firing from the back of a mare at full gallop with wonderful precision; while their many idle hours are spent in games of chance, and the various excitements and temptations of gambling.

Sheik Hottar Amad is considered the first horseman in the Lebanon. Milheim Aga, when in the

Egyptian service, won the admiration of Ibrahim Pacha himself, by his fearless gallantry, and the recklessness of his exploits. In fact, the wild and hardy looks of the Druses in these highlands, involuntarily impress a stranger with the conviction, that he is amongst a people bred up from their infancy to deeds of daring, and ill-accustomed to brook the restraints and usages of civilized life.

The sources of the Barook are near the village of that name, and enjoy a just celebrity for their purity and coolness. The House of Eid, originally from Aleppo, rule over the Upper Arkoob, of which the principal village is Ainshalti, situated near the source of the Suffa, which gushes from the living rock, with surpassing volume and copiousness.

Here, as at Hamdoon, there is a rising Protestant community, with a school carried on under the auspices of the American missionaries. The hills between Ainshalti, and Aindara the residence of the Sheiks Atalla, abound with smooth round pebbles, the size of musket-balls, of which the Druses frequently avail themselves in times of war, when short of ammunition.

Ghurb il Bekaa. Sloping down agreeably towards the valley of the Bekaa, the ranges of this district, abounding in vineyards, are within the jurisdiction of the House of Bilemma. Its principal village, Zachle, has within the last few years sprung up into considerable importance. It is indeed, the largest in Mount Lebanon, and comprises a population of upwards of 6000 souls, entirely Christians. The principal merchants are dealers in wool, going themselves to a great distance into the interior, even sometimes as far as Erzeroom, to purchase large flocks of sheep, which they procure at a very insignificant price, and then bring them by slow stages to Baalbec and the Bekaa, where they dispose of them at very remunerative prices. The Jesuits have lately commenced a scholastic establishment here, which is numerously attended; and the allurements of their confessional are said to have considerably circumscribed the spiritual operations of the native priesthood. In its immediate vicinity is Maalaka, which is the residence of the Turkish Pasha, to whom is entrusted the government of the plains of Baalbec and the Bekaa.

With no regular system of administration, without even the semblance of a police, to protect the peasantry from the attacks and spoliation of wandering parties of lawless depredators, who make descents on the villages without the slightest interruption, the Turkish government is rapidly bringing these fertile and luxuriant districts to a state of poverty and waste. While to add to their various calamities, the Pashas, who rapidly succeed each other in command, look only to their own personal profits, and, by means of the bribes and extortions which they exact from the people, are fast reducing them to beggary. In fact, throughout the whole of Syria, although the name of the Sultan is by the mere force of habit and custom alluded to in terms of obedience and respect, yet his government is loathed and detested, and is universally designated as one of—*Destruction.*





Fras Halpen, Lith

M & N. Hanhart. Imp

HOWARRA

SEAT AND PROPERTY OF COLONEL CHURCHILL

CHAPTER XI.

Mount Lebanon, or the mountain range which is at present dignified with that name, was taken possession of, more or less, by the Arab tribes in the year of our Lord 821.

Comprehending different families, with distinctive appellations, and under separate chiefs, varying in rank and influence, they were of one common descent from the Beni Hammiar. The Arabic manuscripts indulge in terms of extraordinary eulogy of a certain princess of that tribe, named Ma-Summa. Remarkable for her beauty, grace, and virtue, she was the ornament of her tribe, and the wonder of the age in which she lived; for she was ennobled by qualities, which gained for her a position of importance and consideration, not

usually conceded to her sex, by the manners of the East. She had a son called Naaman, who obtained the title of Malek, or king, indicative probably of his more than usual wealth and power. At the very remote period in which he flourished, the Beni Hammiar exercised an undisputed pre-eminence over all the Arab tribes who inhabited the plains of Arabia Felix. Their genealogy has been clearly and distinctly preserved. Recorded in the style, and with the precision of the genealogies of the Bible, it recedes in regular and uninterrupted gradation to Noah, as their great progenitor.

King Naaman lived in the neighbourhood of Yemen, and paid a yearly tribute to Chosroes, king of Persia. This sovereign, having on one occasion pressed upon him with some severe and unwonted exactions, he rose up in arms and declared resistance. Chosroes sent against him a powerful expedition, under his son Sheerazan. A long and harassing war ensued, in which the latter was slain. Wearied at length by his fruitless endeavours to subdue the Arabs, Chosroes sent messengers to Naaman with offers of peace, and an invitation to a personal interview. The latter

accepted this prospect of reconciliation, and went to the court of the Persian potentate; but no sooner had he entered the royal presence, than Chosroes fiercely upbraiding him as being the cause of his son's death, had him seized and flung under the feet of elephants, who trampled him to death.

His tribe continued the war, and endeavoured to avenge his loss, though not with any great effect; for it is certain, that a few years afterwards, the Beni Hammiar, under Malek Minder, son of Naaman, with all the Arab tribes who were in any way connected with or dependant on them, made a general move toward Irak, or Bagdad. After a long residence in those parts, the Arabs separated, and continuing their progress northwards, some went and established themselves on the Nahrein, near Mosul; while Malek Naaman the younger, son of Minder, led twelve tribes to the vicinity of Aleppo, and occupied a district called the Maarra.

Two hundred years afterwards, and about coeval with the appearance of Mohammed, the tribes who had gone to the Nahrein, joined their relatives near Aleppo, and located themselves on the Djebel il Aala, a mountain in the vicinity of the Maarra,

which had assumed, and still retains the distinctive appellation of, Maarat Naaman. Of these, the most conspicuous were the Beni Tnooh and Beni Rabeea, the former a branch of the Beni Hammiar. From them arose the two great feudal Houses of Tnooh and Maan, which afterwards held almost independent sway in the Lebanon. Here the Arabs, tempted probably by the abundance of materials which existed in the ruined towns about them, gradually acquired the art of building and fortifying, and have certainly left some very substantial proofs of their progress in these matters.

The mausoleum erected to the memory of Malek Naaman remains to this day, almost intact, in the Maarra, while the extent and solidity of the crumbling walls and gateways, which mark the site of a town in that district, unequivocally evince that they had learned to appreciate the superiority of fixed, over wandering habitations; although from their vicinity to the plains, it is probable the tents and other appurtenances of Arab life were not wholly abandoned. They readily embraced the doctrines of the Koran, presented to them, as it was, by their own race and blood, and both the

Greek Christians, and in after times the Crusaders, felt the effects, on various occasions, of their religious animosity. Indeed, they were under treaties with the ruling power at Aleppo, to assist in protecting the surrounding mountains against the inroads of the Infidel.

Two centuries after these tribes had thus conjointly settled on the Maara and the Djebal il Aala, an incident occurred which gave an unexpected turn to their condition and prospects. An officer of the household of Murjaba, governor of Aleppo, sent to collect some dues, both in money and grain, from the Arabs, assaulted and otherwise ill-treated one of the women. This violation of the sanctity of the harem, so heinous and unpardonable an offence in the eyes of the Easterns, was immediately visited by a fearful retaliation. The offending official was slain on the spot by one of the Emirs, the Emir Nebba, who cut off his head. The Emir, dreading the vengeance of Murjaba, lost no time in collecting his family, with whom he fled to the Kesrouan, where he received a friendly asylum amongst the Maronites. His tribe, however, was summoned to answer for the crime he had com-

mitted. Several of them were seized and thrown into prison, while a most exorbitant sum of money was demanded of them in the way of compensation. The Emirs of the other tribes collected and paid it.

Whether they were influenced by this severity on the part of the governor of Aleppo, or whether they had other and more weighty reasons of dissatisfaction, and this event confirmed and accelerated an already contemplated determination, is not clearly ascertained; but certain it is that, in the following year, the year 821, several of the Arab tribes were on the move, in the direction of Mount Lebanon. The northern parts were in the hands of the Maronites. The southern portion, comprising the mountains above and to the east of Beyrout and Sidon, were naked, barren, and—with the exception of a few Christians who, after having escaped the terrible storm which had lately passed over them, had found there a miserable refuge from the Moslem sword—depopulated.

The leader of this emigration to the Lebanon was the Emir Fowaris Tnooh. The Beni Raslan and the Beni Shweizan were next in importance to

the Tnoohs. Moving along the plains lying between the mountains and the Orontes, until they reached those of Baalbec and the Bekaa, they traced the latter as far as about the modern village of Zahle; when, turning towards and ascending the Lebanon, they made their first halting place at Aindara. From thence, allured by the abundance of water and pasture, they occupied the high grounds about the sources of the rivers Suffa and Barook. At the former, the Beni Shweizan built the village of Ainshalti. The Beni Tnooh and the Beni Raslan raised the village of Aindara.

The Arab tribes contented themselves for many years with the extensive ranges of these regions, till at length, increase of population, the desire of occupying fresh and unbroken districts, and in no small degree, the extreme severity of the winter in those highlands, where the snow sometimes for months interrupts all communication, induced some of them to seek the lower ranges of the Lebanon.

The Beni Shweizan removed to El Kneisy, behind Deir el Kammar. From them is descended the present Druse House of Abdelmelik, who live

at Ebtater. The Beni Raslan moved to Sin el Feel, above Beyrout, and from thence extended themselves to Hulde, on the road from Beyrout to Sidon and Shwyfat, which latter is now the seat of the House of Raslan. A tribe of the Beni Fowaris, a branch of the Tnoohs, went to the Metten, and many years afterwards, the Emir Abou Lemma founded there the modern House of Bilemma. The Tnoohs, with a few inferior tribes, and led by three brothers, the Emirs Fowaris, Abdallah, and Hillal, came down and possessed themselves of the sites now occupied, by the villages of Il Binay, Kafermetta, Rumtoon, Turdela, Aramoon, Ainaksoor, and Abeigh. One of the Emirs, long after, settled at Hosn Serahmool, a small eminence immediately above the sea coast, nearly half way between Beyrout and Sidon; but of the habitations there erected, not a vestige now remains.

Where there was none to dispute possession, the division of property in so wide a tract of mountainous country, was easy and delightful. Neither family discord nor feudal dissension, disturbed the progress and establishment of the new settlers. In a very few years, substantial castles arose. The

wastes were gradually cleared; the sides of the mountains, once covered thickly with the short wild oak, called Sindian, were garnished with terraced plantations of the mulberry and vine. The power and importance of the various Emirs augmented with the increasing number of their dependents, and the enlarged sources of their revenues, now mostly territorial.

At Abeigh, the Emir Fowaris Tnooh erected a castle, some vestiges of which may be seen to this day, and which became the seat of his central government over the southern part of Lebanon. The Arab Emirs began to rival each other in the choiceness of their studs. Most of their time was occupied in the exercise of archery, of the noble and equestrian game of the jereed, and other manly sports. The meedan at Abeigh became celebrated as a rendezvous for the display of horsemanship. The Tnoohs outrivalled all competitors; and when the aged Emir entered the lists, surrounded by eleven noble-looking sons, he must have proudly felt the secret of his fame and reputation.

The manners of settled life by degrees prevailed

in the mountains. The population acquired the arts fostered by peace, and felt the benefits of commerce and civilization. Nor is this surprising, when it is remembered, that at this time, the Arabian Empire was experiencing the humanizing effects of the Caliphat of Bagdad. The towns on the sea coast were rising into importance under a Moslem population; and even to this day, the well-conserved remains of an aqueduct raised on arches, at about two hours' distance from Beyrout, perpetuates the memory, as it was dedicated to the name, of Zobeida, the favourite sultaness of Haroun el Raschid.

The Lebanon enjoyed perfect tranquillity till the time of the Crusades. The advance of the first Crusade, under Godfrey de Bouillon, was viewed by the Arab mountaineers with comparative indifference. When it had become apparent, that the object of the Franks was not so much to take possession of the country, as to gratify a superstitious regard to the city of Jerusalem, in an endeavour to rescue it from the power of the Moslem, the Emirs found no immediate cause for arming their dependents against them. Unmolested in their

form of government and in the enjoyment of their properties, the principle of religious zeal which acted so powerfully on the population around, found but a faint echo in their breasts.

Not many years previously, a silent but most important change had taken place in their faith. The Vicegerent of Mohammed, on earth, had ceased to have claims on their duty and allegiance. Their devotion had been transferred from a temporal to a spiritual head. It is not to be supposed, indeed, that they had at any time been very enthusiastic followers of the Prophet. They had never formed part of those armies which carried the Koran through its rapid and amazing career of proselytism and conquest. The doctrine of the Divine mission had come to them more as a legend, than a heart-stirring and absorbing truth.

When the great Arab race had been engulphed in the mighty vortex of Islamism, how could the few tribes of the Maara venture to maintain a separate and independent theology? Their adhesion had been, therefore, as it were, accidental; the result of circumstances over which they had no possible control, and beneath the exigency of which they

involuntarily bowed. A faith founded upon such a basis, must have been, and was, formal and derisory—a fashion, not a conviction. It is not wonderful, then, that a religion thus loosely assumed and negligently upheld, should have offered no very insurmountable obstacles to novel and enticing doctrines; especially to doctrines so insidiously contrived, as not to strike directly at the magic of a name which custom might have rendered venerable, while they, in fact, undermined and supplanted the entire fabric of belief, to which that name had given authority and sanction.

It is well known, that the Mohammedan world did not long preserve that singleness of purpose and consistency of doctrine, which characterized its first appearance on the great stage of affairs. The path of fame which Mohammed had trod, was soon crowded with competitors grasping at the wreaths of immortality, by similar attempts on the pliability of the human mind. In the words of the poet, he was one of "the madmen who have made men mad by their contagion;" and many and various were the founders of sects and systems, which sprung up under his influence and example.

But of all these inspirations of fraud and superstition, it is questionable whether any exceeded, either in mysticism of conception, or in regularity of design, the system of religion which was palmed upon the public in Cairo, during the concluding period of the Fatimite dynasty. Assuredly none has survived so long, or had such zealous and persevering adherents.

The acts of Mansour-Abou-Ali Hakem-Biamar Allah, or "he who governs by the commandment of God," sixth prince of that line, and the third of those who reigned in Egypt, have been fully registered in the pages of history; nor is it necessary to make further allusion to him at present, than to state, that at the close of his reign, about the year A.D. 1020, after folly, cruelty, and caprice, had nearly exhausted their means of degrading and afflicting the human race within his dominions, his insane pride led him to believe, or induced him to allow others to be led into the belief, that he was a personation of the Deity, or to use the expression of the sect, that the Divinity used his person as "a veil," to conceal its effulgence while on earth. There were not wanting parasites in his court, who

flattered him in this idea, and who even urged him to make it a doctrine of faith amongst the people.

But there was one, a Persian, of the name of Hamzé, son of Ali, son of Achmet, belonging to the sect of Batenians, who seized this passport to fame and fortune, with a tenacity of purpose and a degree of enthusiasm, that might induce the conclusion, that he himself was fully confirmed of the truth of the pretensions thus set forth. It is certain that he was loaded with honours and emoluments, and that he was unceasingly active in procuring partisans, to his real or assumed belief, in the Divinity of Hakem.

Amongst the more zealous of his adherents, was a certain Neshtekeen Darazi, another of the sect of Batenians, by birth a Turk. With more overt ambition and less discretion than his master, he publicly proclaimed his adhesion, in the grand Mosque of Cairo. The people rushed upon him, and would have massacred him on the spot, had he not sought safety in flight. Hakem hesitated to take openly his part, before such an unequivocal burst of public feeling, and facilitated his departure out of the country; giving him at the same time a

large supply of money, and instructions to proceed into the mountains of Syria, and spread the new doctrines which he had espoused. Darazi departed accordingly, and arrived in the Wady Tame above the sources of the Jordan, near Hasbeya, A.D. 1020. There he found hearers amongst the Arabs, and soon made converts.

A footing thus gained, correspondence was opened with Egypt, and Hamzé hastened to avail himself of the favourable opening, that had thus presented itself for the promotion of his views. It will be seen, in another place, how assiduously and how successfully, his plans were carried on. Whether at this period, the Tnoohs had footing in those parts is not clear: it is not improbable. Early in the following century, it is certain they were at times the governors of Hasbeya. At all events, the work of conversion went rapidly on. Ten years did not elapse, before the Arab tribes who inhabited the Lebanon, had mostly adopted the outward profession, while a class set apart had been initiated into the mysteries, of the doctrines of Hamzé. He had not, however, the honour of giving his name to the new religion. The disciples of Darazi, the first

teacher, by a natural and easy etymology, obtained the distinguishing epithet of Druses, and the appellation extended to the whole sect.

After Antioch and Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Franks, it became evident, from the aggressive policy they adopted, that something more was contemplated by their formidable expeditions, than the mere indulgence of religious fervour. Though the primary object of the first Crusade, might have been confined to the rescuing of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Moslem, its leaders soon learned to look for the guerdons of success, in a comprehensive scheme of territorial aggrandizement. This their enemies were not slow to perceive, and the cry to arms consequently resounded, through the length and breadth of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syria. The mountains of Aleppo bristled with a constant succession of warriors coming from all parts, and burning to avenge the disgrace which had fallen on their cause.

The Arab tribes which remained in the Maara, after the great emigration of the year 821, from being in the immediate vicinity, were constantly called upon to give proofs of their bravery and

zeal. The Beni Rabeea, whose arrival at Aleppo from the Nahrein, together with the Tnoohs and other tribes, has already been mentioned, were at this period under the guidance and leadership of the Emir Maan. This able chieftain was one of the principal supports of his party, and the war he waged against the Franks, was as unrelenting as it was for a long time successful. When Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, advanced with a large army to the relief of Antioch, the Emir Maan strengthened by a large re-inforcement of Turks, under the Emir Ghazi, prepared for him a vigorous and well-planned resistance in the passes of Djebel Ussuad, not far from that town. The fortunes of the day for a long time remained in the balance; but the superior numbers of the Franks prevailed, and the Emir found himself compelled to withdraw his forces and seek a shelter behind the battlements of the Maara. The Maara in its turn was besieged, and fell by capitulation.

The Emir Maan now determined to leave a neighbourhood, where the Frank arms had apparently obtained a well-grounded footing and ascendancy. Collecting his tribes, he moved to the

valley of the Bekaa, and went in person to solicit the advice and assistance of Sultan Nouradeen, at Damascus. The Sultan received him with extraordinary marks of honour and hospitality, and loaded him with costly presents. Not willing to lose the services of so distinguished a warrior, and selecting a field for him suited to his talents and experience, he recommended him to occupy, with his followers, the ranges of the Lebanon, which overlooked the plains of Beyrout and Sidon. The Emir did not long hesitate in embracing a plan, which opened to him the prospects of an advantageous and permanent settlement, and a sphere of action against the Frank invaders. Fortified with letters from Nouradeen, and encouraged by his good will and protection, the Emir Maan, in the year 1145, led the Beni Rabeea up the eastern acclivities of the Lebanon, and marching along the high ground of Barook and Kafernebra, finally made his halting place at Bakleen.

The Tnoohs hastened to give him a courteous reception and a hearty welcome. The Emir Bachtar Tnooh, from Abeigh, sent master-masons and labourers to assist the new comers in the construc-

tion of houses. In the course of a few years, Bakleen assumed the appearance of a town, from the midst of which arose the Castle of the Maans, in strong and substantial proportions. Villages gradually sprung up around, notwithstanding the occasional demands on the people for active service in the war; and the entire district over which they extended, and which was especially granted to the Emir Maan by Nouradeen, as a feudal government, obtained the appellation of the "*Shoof*" or the "Look-out," or post of observation against the Franks, which it retains to this day.

The Emir Maan lived to see his family obtain a position of considerable authority and influence in the Lebanon, intermarrying his children and grand-children with the Tnoohs and the Shehaabs; and after thirty years' administration of the affairs of his province, left augmented revenues and increased power, in the hands of his son and successor, the Emir Yoonis. At the same time that Nouradeen commissioned the Emir Maan to go into the Lebanon, he sent a pelisse of honour and a firman to the Emir Bachtar Tnooh, in order to allay any jealousies which might arise in his breast; confirm-

ing him in the government of the district called the Ghurb, which comprised the slopes of the mountains between Beyrout and the river Damoor, and extending his authority over the districts and villages between Beyrout and the Bekaa. A yearly stipend was likewise granted him for the maintenance of 400 horsemen, and with these, his son, the Emir Zaheradeen, for a long time harassed the communications of the Franks along the sea coast.

A terrible calamity overtook their family in the year 1160. The Emir Zahr-i-Dowly, son of the Emir Bachtar, had left three sons. A temporary truce existing between the Mountaineers and the Franks, the Frank Governor of Beyrout invited these three young Emirs to attend at the celebration of the marriage of his son. When the guests were assembled, they were suddenly seized and put to death. Soldiers were forthwith despatched, who burnt and ravaged the villages of Serahmool and Aramoon, where these Emirs and their relatives dwelt, and rased their castles to the ground. Their mother, with the infant Emir Hedya, fled into the interior. But the latter, when arrived at

years of maturity, reaped ample revenge; being present at the siege and taking of Beyrout by Saladin, in the year 1187. The services of this Emir were rewarded by Saladin by a special firman, confirming to him the property of his ancestors, and the government of the range of mountains over Beyrout and Sidon.

To understand the force of the clause in this firman, which secured to the Emir the undisturbed possession of his private property, it must be borne in mind that the feudal system, strictly speaking, only began in Syria at this period. It emanated originally from the Sultans of Persia, a short time before the Crusades. From thence, it extended into Mesopotamia and Syria, until Saladin reduced it to a system, carrying it even into Egypt, where, until his time, it was wholly unknown. It was, in fact, the main, and indeed an indispensable ingredient of his power. The religious zeal which had inspired the first defenders of Islamism against the Franks, cooled down and considerably wore off, under the severe and repeated demands of a protracted war. The difficulty which Saladin experienced in rallying the Eastern Emirs is well

known; and, in effect, it was chiefly by motives of self-interest, that he kept them to his standard at all. During his life-time, he divided the principal provinces of his empire amongst his sons, and these again divided their territories into feudal fiefs, which they distributed in appanages amongst their principal followers.

When Saladin was overtaken by his last and fatal illness, at Damascus, his eldest son, Malek Afdal, hastened to call upon the Emirs and Lords of Fiefs to take the following oath:

"I," so and so, "vow and declare by these presents, an inviolable attachment, and render a sincere homage to the Sultan Saladin, as long as I live. I swear to defend him with all my powers, with my person, with my goods, with my sword, and with my men; promising at all times to conform myself to his orders, and to conduct myself according to his good and sovereign will. After him, I swear fidelity and allegiance to Malek Afdal, his son and presumptive heir. I promise before God to be faithful to him, to defend his authority and his estates, with my person, my goods, my sword, and my men. I swear that I

will always show deference to his wishes, internally and externally; and I call God to witness this my promise and engagement." Afdal presented this form of oath to all who held any place under the government, and sent it by messengers, to the chiefs who resided at a distance.

Some took the oath without reserve, others made the taking of it conditional, on their being assured of the enjoyment of all their goods and properties. Many, in swearing fidelity to Malek Afdal, personally reserved to themselves, the right of refusing to bear arms against his brothers. More than one claimed exception from taking the oath at all, on the plea that their services had always been gratuitous. The spirit of feudalism must already have taken deep root to have manifested itself so unequivocally.

CHAPTER XII.

On the succession of Malek Afdal to the throne of Syria, the Emir Hedya Tnooh received an early testimony, of the consideration and importance in which he was held by the new sovereign. In a letter which he addressed to him, the Sultan conjures him to continue faithful to his cause, and, assuring him that he was about to make a special treaty with the Franks, that whatever might happen, his government and property in the Lebanon should be respected, forwarded to him at the same time a firman, confirming him in his appanage of the following villages, and their grounds adjacent: Aramoon, Aindrafeel, Ainaksoor, Rumtoon, Kudroon, Mestafoon, Sbahieh, Serahmool, Ainab, Ainanoob, and Dweir.

To keep the Arab Emirs of the Lebanon in their interest, was always a point of the utmost importance, to those princes who contended for ascendency in Syria. The governments of Damascus and Cairo, and, at a later period, of the Tartars, constantly courted their assistance and allegiance. On the death of Saladin, Syria became the theatre of civil wars between his inheritors. He left seventeen sons, and one daughter. The three eldest had been put in possession of their states before their father died. The others,* who were too young, got no governments, and lived as simple individuals. Malek Afdal, the eldest, had Damascus and Southern Syria, with Palestine; his father had given him the title of Sultan, which gave him a kind of supremacy over his brothers, and all the princes of his family. Malek Azeez, second son of Saladin, had Egypt; and his third son, Malek Daher, the principality of Aleppo. The nephews and other princes of the family of Saladin, who had already been invested with cer-

* Their descendants are now living at Damascus in obscurity and poverty, under the name of the House of Saleh, and receive a monthly allowance out of the revenues of the "Wakf," or sacred property, belonging to the Great Mosque in that city.

tain principalities, likewise kept them. Malek Adel —Saladin's brother, the sharer of his dangers and his glory, and who, by his talents and experience, combined with untiring energy and decision of character, exercised the greatest influence over the Mussulmen population—kept what he had already obtained, Kerek, Schaubek, and some towns of Mesopotamia.

Scarcely had the great Saladin closed his eyes, ere the princes, his sons, broke out into family dissensions. Possessing none of the qualities of their illustrious father, they were deficient, moreover, of the experience necessary for the management of affairs. The old and faithful ministers and servants of Saladin, were dismissed from their posts, and favourites without any quality, save that of administering to the passions and caprices of their masters, promoted to the vacant offices. It is in allusion to this degrading conduct, that Bohaeddeen, after having recounted the great deeds of Saladin, and of his chief Emirs, terminates his history in the following verse: "Thus years elapsed, thus men passed away, and soon those men and those years, became nothing more than an idle dream."

Malek Adel alone, had preserved any ascendency. The Prince of Mosul, leagued with other princes of Mesopotamia, who only obeyed Saladin by constraint, having endeavoured to throw off the yoke, it was he who reduced them to obedience. The sons of Saladin, particularly Malek Afdal, had given themselves up to vice and debauchery. Malek Adel encouraged Afdal in these propensities, and as he sometimes betrayed a sense of shame and decency, would rally him with this verse:

"What is pleasure, if it is to be made a mystery of."

Afdal soon estranged the hearts of his Emirs; and his brother Azeez, impelled by a blind ambition, hurried from Egypt to strip him of his dominions. The princes of the family of Saladin, however, successfully interposed their mediation, and the breach was for the moment healed.

Afdal, alarmed at his danger, began to reform. It is even said that, as a mark of repentance, he copied out the Koran with his own hand. But Azeez soon returned to resume his designs, and laid siege to Damascus. Malek Adel, softened probably by the entreaties of Afdal, who gladly resigned the management and guidance of affairs, into his able

and experienced hands, made common cause with him against his brother, and pursued Azeez into Egypt. Suddenly, however, and just as he was on the point of reducing him, he changed his policy, made an alliance with him, and with their joint forces, returned and attacked the Sultan of Syria. Afdal was shortly after driven from Damascus, and a treaty was made, by which Azeez was to keep Egypt, while Adel governed as his lieutenant in Syria.

These divisions gave the Franks in Syria and Palestine, a temporary security. Count Henry of Champagne, nephew of Richard Cœur de Léon, reigned over the Christians. The Christian authors give him the title of King of Jerusalem; but as Jerusalem was no longer in the power of the Franks, the Arab writers call him King of Acre, and always mention his successors under that appellation, seeing that the town of St. Jean d'Acre, or Ptolemais, had become the capital of the Christian colonies. Saladin had shortly before he died, entrusted the government of Beyrout to the Emir Heyda Tnoob, on whom he likewise conferred the name of Jemaladeen, or the "Grace of Religion,"

as a testimony of his faithful and important services.

The injuries sustained by his family, during his infancy, at the hands of the Franks, had sunk deeply into the Emir's mind.* Personal hatred, and a spirit of revenge, as yet unsatiated, prompted him to seek every occasion of carrying disaster into their ranks. The very day on which the treaty of peace between Saladin and Richard I. expired, the Emir caused a descent to be made on some Christian vessels which appeared off the coast.

In vain the Franks complained to Malek Azeez and Malek Adel, of this sudden violation of the peace. They received no satisfaction. They then addressed themselves to their brethren in the West. "If you do not hasten to our assistance," they wrote, "we are lost; and we shall be driven from the towns which as yet belong to us."

An urgent appeal was more especially made to the Emperor Henry VI., then all-powerful in Sicily, as being more in the way of giving them immediate succour. This prince was the son of the Emperor Ferdinand, who had been drowned in

* See p. 238.

Asia Minor, and who, in his last testament, had given orders that, if he died in the Crusade, his body should be carried to and interred at Jerusalem. His friends and executors not having been able to accomplish this object, had deposited the mortal remains of the Emperor, at Tyre. The Christians, to awaken a feeling of sympathy and affection in his breast, wrote to Henry VI., in the following words:—"We still preserve at Tyre the remains of your father: these precious relics wait to be released from their imprisonment, to be carried to Jerusalem. Then only will they rest in peace. Seize the occasion, while the Mussulmen are fighting against each other." The appeal was not made in vain. The Christians of the West, and particularly the subjects of the Emperor, flocked to Syria.

The Crusaders were conducted by a Bishop, of the name of Conrad, the Emperor's Chancellor. Malek Adel, fearing that single-handed he could not oppose the approaching re-inforcements, sought the support of the Sultan of Egypt, and the princes of Mesopotamia. In the mean time he rapidly concentrated his disposable forces, and fell upon Jaffa, which he took and gave up to pillage. The

Christians, who had hastened from Tyre to the relief of that town, being apprized of its fate at Cæsarea, retraced their steps, and, determined to be equal with their adversary, marched to the attack of Beyrout. Malek Adel had anticipated their design. The Tnoohs and the Maans received instructions to occupy the mountain passes near Sidon. Not judging Beyrout to be in a condition to resist the siege, he ordered it to be dismantled; but the Emir Jemaladeen declared he would at least defend the Castle, and threw a garrison into it.

The Christian army advanced. The mountaineers gave them a severe reception, but were obliged at last to give way, and the following morning, the Christians entered Beyrout without striking a blow. After a slight repose, they returned to Tyre, and laid siege to Tebneen, then a fortress in the mountains above that town, and now occupied by a Metuali Shiek, called Hamed il Bey. The Christian army was commanded by a priest. The siege was pushed on with the greatest vigour, and the garrison soon asked to surrender; but while the Mussulmen deputies were arranging the terms of capitulation in the Frank camp, a

Syrian Christian privately whispered them:—"Beware how you surrender: this priest will treat you as prisoners, and put the leaders among you to death." From this instant, the parley was abruptly broken off, and the besieged determined to resist to the death. Several attacks were afterwards made, but in vain; and the news being spread that Malek Azeez was advancing from Egypt with large forces, the Franks withdrew.

Some time after, however, negotiations were opened, and peace was renewed for a space of three years. By this treaty, the Franks kept Beyrout, and the Emir Jemaladeen, withdrawing his men, retired to his mountain abode at Dweir, where he had built a house, after the destruction of Serahmool and Aramoon. For the next few years, nothing of much importance occurred to disturb the relations of the contending parties. Malek Adel, on the death of his nephew Azeez, at first contented himself with assuming the regency, but shortly after invested himself with the title of Sultan of Egypt; uniting in his own hands all the provinces of the Empire of Saladin, with the exception of the principality of Aleppo, which still

remained under that Monarch's third son, Malek Daher.

From the year 1203, however, irregular bands of crusaders, crowding from all the ports of Europe, successively followed each other, and accumulated at Acre. Without plans, without leaders, the Franks would sometimes sally forth, plunder and devastate the neighbouring plains and villages, and return. Once they showed pretensions of advancing on Jerusalem, but the presence of Malek Adel in the mountains of Naplouse, effectually cooled their ardour. Some sailed for Constantinople, to take part in the bloody tragedy which was being enacted in that city, where the princes of Europe rivalled each other in barbarity and ambition, and sacked and plundered the subjects of a sovereign they had ostensibly gone thither to support.* Others would hire a few vessels, and make a corsair-like descent on Egypt, ravage the villages on the coast, and re-embark.

Acre, in fact, became the rendezvous of a per-

* The Doge of Venice, the Marquis of Montferrat, and the Count of Flanders, actually drew lots for Constantinople: it fell to the latter.—*Aboulfarage. Arab. Chron.*

manent assemblage of robbers and brigands from the West, not one whit less disorderly or rapacious than the Tartar hordes, who were at the same time beginning to appear in the East. Blending with their atrocities the sacred name of religion, and the worst spirit of fanaticism, the Franks of this period, were even more dreaded by the Mussulmen, than the Tartars. "These," says Ibn Ferat, the Arab historian, "where they found territories that suited them, mixed willingly with the people they conquered, submitting themselves to the religion and the laws of the country. The Franks, on the contrary, constantly endeavour above everything, to subdue consciences. Religion, the ostensible motive of their distant wars, puts an insurmountable barrier between the vanquished and their conquerors. In taking possession of a country, their object is to destroy its inhabitants and establish their religion."

In the year 1218, a more formidable expedition than had ever proceeded from Acre, left that port for the purpose of attacking Damietta, which, after a prolonged siege of nearly a year and a half, fell into the hands of its invaders. Malek Adel never for a day quitted Syria, using the most

indefatigable exertions, by attacking the Christians on all points, to create a diversion in favour of Egypt, which he had committed to the care of his son and successor, Malek Kamil. But all to no purpose. At length, hearing of the horrors and disasters which had befallen his countrymen during that fatal siege, he died of grief and melancholy near the hill of Afeck, not far from the lake of Tiberias, in the month of September A.D. 1219. After the assault and taking of Damietta, A.D. 1219, the Franks contemplated no less than the conquest and occupation of the whole of Egypt, and impatiently awaited the arrival of reinforcements from Europe.

As to the new Sultan, Malek Kamil, he wrote letters on letters, to his brothers, to the princes of his family, and to all the Mussulmen powers, imploring their assistance. But the actual state of circumstances was most discouraging to his hopes. Genghis Khan and his savage hordes had begun to make their appearance. The Tartars, after having subdued nearly all the north of Asia, were approaching towards Persia, and menaced the provinces bordering on Syria. All the Mussulmen

princes feared for their own states, and dared not engage in a distant war. The Caliph himself trembled in his capital. The crisis was imminent, and the Sultan at last sent his brother, Malek Moadam, prince of Damascus,* who had hitherto fought by his side, to Syria, in order to arouse the population into something like fervour and activity.

The Mussulmen of Syria showed little enthusiasm; but the prince supplied all deficiencies on this head, by his unwearied zeal. He summoned to his standard, in the most pressing terms, the emirs and chiefs both of the mountains and plains. Shortly, the princes of Hamah, Emessa, and Baalbec advanced with their contingents.

The Emirs of the Lebanon gathered together a sufficiently large quota from their followers and dependents, and sent them to join in what had been pronounced, the sacred war. The arrival of these reinforcements in Egypt, was timely and opportune. Malek Kamil saw himself surrounded by nearly 40,000 cavalry; as for the infantry, "it was almost," says Makrizi, "innumerable, swelled as it

* Second son of Malek Adel.

was by a vast collection of people from all parts; animated, however, by a zeal equal to that of the regular troops." The Sultan, though in a state to have attacked the Frank camp, now considerably in advance of Damietta, called to his aid a novel but irresistible ally. The Nile being then at its height, he ordered the sluices of the canals to be opened, and the dikes to be overthrown. In a few hours, the Franks found themselves surrounded on all sides by a vast swamp, and their communications with Damietta cut off. Nothing was left to them but unconditional surrender.

This extraordinary and sudden change in the aspect of affairs, is treated by all the Arab histo rians, as an undeniable proof of the favourable intervention of the Deity in behalf of Islamism; and they record, in terms of pride and exultation, that the Mussulmen recovered Damietta, without striking a blow, in a state of perfect conservation, and with its fortifications so improved as to be nearly impregnable; at the very time when they had offered in exchange for it, all the Christian towns of Palestine and Syria which had been conquered by Saladin, including Jerusalem itself.

The Crusades which ensued during the next quarter of a century, of Frederic II. in Syria, and Louis IX. in Egypt, were entirely abortive of any permanent advantages to the Franks.

All sense of religion had gradually been decaying on the part of the Christians, and the spirit of honour and chivalry, which Saladin had so strenuously endeavoured to infuse into the breasts of the Mussulmen, had become extinct. It scarcely required the presence of an infidel like the Emperor of Germany, in the Holy Land, to confound and subvert every remaining principle of decency and propriety. Invited by Malek Kamil to support his cause, in a quarrel which had broke out between him and his brother, Malek Moadam, prince of Damascus, that monarch came to Syria, less to forward any particular views of his own, than to make a vain and ostentatious display of his rank and authority.

The Christians, at first, saw with surprise, but soon learned to imitate, the intimate relations which existed between him and the Mussulmen princes. There are grounds for supposing that he meditated erecting a neutral ground, on which the two religions might come to a compromise and union.

He would not unfrequently summon the Sheiks of Islam, and enter into controversial disputes with them, on the doctrines of their faith; at times conceding, that there were grounds on which their religion was preferable to his own. That he displayed no inconsiderable share of learning on these and other matters, is evident from the testimony of Makrizi, who represents the Emperor as a prince well instructed in the science of geometry, and no inconsiderable master of philosophy and mathematics.

According to the taste of that time, he used to send difficult problems in these sciences, to the Sultan Malek Kamil, who had them explained and resolved by one of his Sheiks, and sent him others in return. He literally coaxed the Sultan out of the cession of Jerusalem, by such letters as the following:—"You know I am your friend. You are aware how far I am above all the princes of the West. It was you engaged me to come hither. The kings and the pope have been informed of my voyage, and if I should return without having obtained anything, I shall lose all consideration in their eyes. After all, this Jerusa-

lem, did it not give birth to the Christian religion, and is it not you who have destroyed it? It is now reduced to the last degree of misery; do me the one favour of giving it up to me just as it is, that at least I may be able to hold up my head when I go back to Europe." To the Emir Faker-adeen, the Sultan's intimate adviser, he wrote again:—"I should not have urged the matter so strenuously, if I was not afraid of losing all my credit in the West. In fact, my object in coming here was not to deliver the Holy City; nothing of the kind. I wanted to make a name amongst the Franks."

It cost the Sultan some pangs to yield to the wishes of his friend; but, as he said, "Jerusalem was nothing better than a heap of rubbish; and a momentary concession, to gratify a spirit of vanity, might enable him to get rid of the presence of a monarch, who had the means of becoming formidable." It was agreed, accordingly, that Jerusalem should be left exactly in the condition in which it was, and that no new fortifications were to be raised. The Mussulmen were to keep the Mosque of Omar, with full liberty to exercise the rites of

their religion; and the Christians were to have the rest of the city, with leave to travel exclusively on the road to Acre.

A treaty to this effect was drawn up, and peace was sworn to by both parties for ten years and five months, beginning from the 24th of February, 1229. The Emperor proceeded to take possession of his new acquisition, and the Sultan sent the Emir Shumsadeen, the Cadi of Naplouse, to accompany him, with strict injunctions that nothing should be done, which could possibly give umbrage to the monarch. Amongst other things, there was to be no predication in the Mosque of Omar, and calling to prayers from the minaret, during his residence in the Holy City.

The first day, the Cadi had forgotten to give the necessary orders, and the criers to prayer performed the functions as usual: one of them afterwards repeated aloud some expressions more particularly levelled against the Christians; amongst others, "How can God have Jesus for his Son, when he was the son of Mary?" The Emperor was lodged in a house close under the minaret, and had these words explained to him by some of his attendants.

The Cadi, greatly vexed, sent for the delinquent, and, vehemently reproaching him, strictly forbade him and all others from uttering any call to prayer whatever.

Two days afterwards, the Emperor sent for the Cadi, and asked him why the calls to prayer had ceased. The latter made his excuses, and admitted that they had been forbidden, lest his majesty might be offended. "Not at all," replied the Emperor; "you are quite wrong: do not by any means, on my account, be wanting in your duty to your laws and your religion." He had carefully translated to him, the inscription on the front of the Sacred Chapel, which contained the following words: "Saladin purified the holy city the year 583 (A.D. 1187) from the presence of those who adored many gods,"—an allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity.

On asking the Cadi why there were screens in the windows of the chapel, he was told that they had been put up to keep out the sparrows. "You have got rid of the sparrows," he replied, with a laugh; "but God has sent you the pigs,"—an epithet given in scorn by the Mohammedans to the Christians.

He took Mussulmen and Christians indiscriminately into his service; and the former regularly performed their ablutions and prayers before him, without being in the least molested. The Arabs were fully persuaded that the Emperor was at heart, a Mussulman, and that nothing but a dread of offending his subjects, prevented him from openly declaring himself. It may be difficult to decide, whether this Emperor was the first to set the example, of such unblushing disregard to the commonest restraints, not only of morality, but of policy; or whether he was not rather the distinguished representative of a spirit, then generally existing. Certain it is, about this time, large bodies of Franks were to be seen, enrolled and fighting under the banners of Islamism.

The Sultan of Iconium had a considerable force of them in his pay. They were generally picked out for the most dangerous and hazardous enterprises; and, indeed, their own warlike spirit led them mostly, to volunteer their services on such occasions. There appeared in Asia Minor, a Turcoman, who called himself the Pope, and who determined on making himself respected, sword in

hand, as the Apostle of God. Collecting a formidable band, all who denied his mission, of whatever creed or sect, were cut to pieces. Troops had been sent against him, but were always beaten. The Sultan of Icomium at last appealed to his Franks. They joyfully accepted the undertaking, advanced against the Turcoman, and falling on him in the name of Christ, and making the sign of the Cross, they presently slew the upstart Pope, and exterminated all his followers.

These details do not strictly belong to the present subject, but in treating of events in which the Emirs and the mountaineers of the Lebanon took a part, it may not be wholly irrelevant to mark the spirit and tendency of the times,—a spirit which, as much as any other cause, contributed to the downfall of Frank dominion in the East.

CHAPTER XIII.

After the departure of the Emperor, Malek Kamil proceeded in his endeavours to possess himself of all the provinces belonging to his brothers. The Prince of Damascus was besieged in his capital, and compelled to retire. The Sultan pursued his successes towards Emessa and the neighbouring towns; but death suddenly cut him short in the midst of his career. His eldest son, Malek Adel, enjoyed but a short time the sovereignty of Egypt. His brother, Malek Saleh Nejmadeen, who had received as his portion, Haran, Emessa, and some towns of Mesopotamia, advanced by forced marches, and found the people in his favour. Malek Adel was strangled, and Malek Saleh elevated to the vacant dignity.

Profiting by the new Sultan's absence, his uncle, Ismael, had seized the principality of Damascus, and had bribed the Christians to espouse his part, by ceding to them the important fortresses of Shakeef and Safed, and promising to deliver up to them all their former possessions in Palestine, in case of success. Malek Saleh, on hearing of these events, lost no time in calling upon his adherents in Syria to remain faithful to his cause. He wrote a most pressing letter to the Emir Nejmadeen Mohammed Tnooh, son of the Emir Jemaladeen, recalling to his mind the example and the fidelity of his father to the interests of his great ancestors, warning him against becoming a party to, or in any way countenancing, the disgraceful alliance which had just been formed between his uncle and the Christians, and assuring him of his own speedy arrival in Syria, to assert and maintain his rights.

The Emir was not in a position to make an open declaration of his sentiments. The presence of Ismael at Damascus, the raising of levies which he was urging on all sides, for an expedition into Egypt, the momentary influence which the acces-

sion of the Christians to his cause had given him —all these circumstances conspired in making the Emir march with the tide of events, and when Ismael summoned his forces to advance, the Emirs of the Houses of Tnooh and Maan, with their numerous dependents and clansmen, were found swelling the numbers of the Syrian army. Malek Saleh, on his part, had collected his power, and was fast approaching.

The two armies met on the plains of Ascalon, A.D. 1240. The battle, however, was not of long duration; for, in the midst of the conflict, the Tnoohs and the Maans, with the mountaineers of the Lebanon, suddenly turned round against their allies, and made common cause with the Egyptians. The Christians, who had rallied numerously under the standard of Ismael, were attacked on all sides, and put to flight, while that leader himself made a hasty retreat, and arrived alone and disheartened at Damascus. The Sultan did not pursue his advantage. Content, for the time, with having disabled his enemy, he consented to a truce, and returned to Cairo.

Four years had scarcely expired, when he was

again summoned to take up arms against his uncle, who had collected a large army under Malek Mansour, Prince of Edessa, and threatened him with an invasion. The battle of Gaza, A.D. 1244, decided the fortunes of the day in the Sultan's favour. He this time took possession of Jerusalem and Damascus in person; and, after thus uniting under his sway nearly the whole of the Province of Palestine, and Syria, he hurried back to Egypt, menaced by the Crusades of Louis IX. The mountaineers of the Lebanon, released by the victories of Malek Saleh from that position of restraint under which they had hitherto laboured, furthered his interests as much as in their power.

In the ensuing year, the Maans made a descent upon Sidon, and took it from the Christians, in the name of the Sultan. But Malek Saleh sunk under the prodigious efforts he was obliged to make to resist the Franks, and ten days after they had taken Damietta, he expired, at the age of forty-seven. He had always indulged in a strong predilection for Turkish slaves, whom he purchased on the shores of the Black Sea, and the Caspian. He constituted them the Mamelukes of his guard,

making them replace the Kurds, who had hitherto been the nerve of the Egyptian armies; and, under him, they became a well-organized and formidable militia.

Not that they ever imposed upon his authority; for these slaves, brave and audacious as they were, trembled in his presence. But from out of their ranks, in the reign of his successors, arose that Mameluke dynasty, which gave the final blow to the Crusades.

The Christians, to whom the fortresses of Shakeef and Safed had been surrendered, according to the conditions above mentioned, no sooner found themselves in so favourable a position, than they made a descent on Wady Tame, and menaced Hasbeya, in the Anti-Lebanon. The Emir Aamir Shehaab gave them battle on the plains of Merjyoom; and, after four days hard fighting, in which he was assisted by the Emir Abdallah Maan, who advanced to his support from the Shoof, defeated and dispersed them. The mountaineers had just returned from the battle of Gaza, and no doubt rejoiced in this fresh opportunity, of displaying their zeal in the Sultan's cause.

It is related of the Emir Aamir, that he undertook the cultivation of large tracts of land in the plain of the Bekaa; whether upon any special terms with the government of Damascus, to whom the superintendence of this district has immemorially belonged, does not appear. The Bekaa, at least the southern part, was, at a very remote period, one large sheet of water; nor can it be exactly defined, when the process of drainage commenced. It certainly offered an insurmountable obstacle to Antiochus the Great, in his war with Ptolemy. Advancing with his army from Laodicea, Antiochus continued his route until he entered the valley of Marsyas, the modern Bekaa, where he was stopped by a lake, secured by two fortresses, one on either side, called Bronchi and Gerrha—now Ub-Elias and Mejdel.

Finding that Theodotus the Ætolian, who was at that time sincere in Ptolemy's service, had placed strong garrisons in both these places, and had fortified with trenches and palisades, the small space which intervened between them and the lake, besides stationing troops on the high grounds adjacent, he used his utmost efforts to force a

passage. After suffering great loss in the attempt, he was obliged to abandon his enterprise. In the following spring, however, he returned into Syria by the same line of march as before; encouraged by a treasonable correspondence which Theodotus had opened with him, and in which that general promised to deliver him up the above-named fortresses. Theodotus had prevailed on Panætolus, another of Ptolemy's generals, also to desert his master's cause; and it was agreed between them, that the former should take possession of Tyre, and the latter of Acre, in the name of Antiochus.

But when that monarch arrived in the Bekaa, he received information that Theodotus was besieged in Acre, by Nicolaus and a division of Ptolemy's army. Leaving his heavy forces to besiege the forts, he advanced rapidly with his light troops over the mountains, and encountered and defeated Eagoras the Cretan, and Docymenes the Ætolian, who had drawn up an army to defend the heights above the river Damoor, a few hours to the south of Beyrout. Nicolaus having raised the siege of Acre on the approach of Antiochus, Theodotus and Panætolus advanced to salute that

monarch, who, finding the road open before him, withdrew his reserves from the Bekaa.*

On the death of Malek Saleh, his son was called to the throne; but the angry rivalry of the Mamelukes soon threw everything into confusion. They conspired against their sovereign, surrounded his palace, and dragged him down into the outer court, where one of their leaders, Bibars Bondocdar, who afterwards became so renowned, cut him down with his sabre. After various changes, the Mamelukes became undisputed possessors of supreme power, and even entered into treaties with Malek Nusser, grandson of Saladin, who from being Prince of Aleppo, had become Sultan of Syria—guaranteeing their reciprocal possessions.

About this time, A.D. 1257, the Tartars and the Moguls, under the command of Houlagou, grandson of Ghengis Khan, after having invaded Persia and Asia Minor, advanced into Mesopotamia, and threatened Islamism with a complete overthrow. Houlagou took Bagdad, and there put an end for ever, to the Empire of the Caliphs. On approaching Syria, the Christians at once entered into friendly relations with him. He summoned, attacked, and

* *Polyb. Legat.*

ransacked Aleppo. The carnage lasted more than a week. Malek Nusser fell an early victim, and in his person perished the dynasty of the Ayoobs, of which Saladin was the founder, after a duration of ninety-two years. Hamah hastened to send its keys to Houlagou. Damascus and other towns of Syria soon followed the example, and in a very short space of time, the Tartars occupied the whole country up to the frontiers of Egypt.

The year before the disasters of Aleppo, Malek Nusser, whose extended dominions were new and precarious, had studiously endeavoured to gain over the principal Emirs of the Lebanon to his interests. The Emir Nejmaladeen Tnooh accepted from him a firman, in which the villages of Aramoon, Aindrafeel, Ainaksoor, Rumtoon, Kadroon, Mestafoon, Sabahieh, Serahmool, Ainab, Ainanoob, and Dweir, were confirmed to him as a feudal appanage. The death of Melek Nusser, and the approach of the Tartars, affected for a time the relations of the Lebanon with the native princes. Houlagou wrote from Damascus to the Emir Nejmaladeen, offering to give him the government of the entire mountains, if he would espouse his cause.

The Tnoohs accepted the conditions, and declared in his favour; at the same time, however, the Emir Zanadeen Tnooh was sent to Cairo, to salute the Mameluke, Bibars Bondocdar, on his elevation to the throne of Egypt, under the title of Malek Daher, or "King triumphant." That Sultan had already determined to signalize his reign by the accomplishment of two objects, which he ever steadily kept in view—the ruin of the Christians of Syria, and the subjugation of the Tartars. The Sultan received the Emir with every mark of kindness and hospitality; and, glad of the occasion thus early offered to exercise an act of sovereignty in the Lebanon, sent the Emir Nejmaladeen a firman, —no doubt at the request and under the dictation of the Emir Zanadeen,—extending his authority to the districts occupied by the villages of Komateea, Mekeen, Shimlan, Kafermay, and Ebtater; and giving him Bisoor, Mejdleya, Dweir, Kafoon, and Beertane, as his private property, with instructions to preserve the mountain passes against the Franks.

This crafty policy on the part of the Tnoohs, so characteristic of that spirit of wariness, which has become hereditary amongst the Druse Sheiks, did

not, however, long avail them. The defection of the Emirs of the Lebanon to the Tartars could not be kept secret, and on the first arrival of this intelligence in Egypt, the Emir Zanadeen was ordered to be put to death. It is said that his skill in archery saved him, and that the anger of the Sultan yielded to his admiration, on beholding the Emir's superiority in that warlike science.

Syria had become a scene of the utmost disorder and confusion. In the year 1254, a peace for ten years had been made in the name of Louis IX., between the Christians and Malek Nusser. The invasion of the Tartars had deranged everything. The Christians, divided amongst themselves, no longer respected any engagements. The Prince of Antioch was continually exciting and encouraging the Tartars. The roads were infested both by land and sea. If the Mussulmen treated with the Hospitallers, the Templars would immediately take up arms. If the peace was kept at Acre, the King of Cyprus made hostile descents on the coast. Bibars having sent a deputation to the Emperor of Constantinople, the deputies were seized by the ships of the King of Cyprus, and loaded with

chains. In the interior, it depended on the caprice of any petty chief to make an incursion on his neighbour's territory, and light up intestine commotions.

Bibars, resolving to put an end to this state of affairs, advanced from Egypt with an overwhelming army. The Christians trembled at his approach, and sent messengers from all sides to declare their willingness to keep the treaty. He received them before Acre, and bitterly reviled them for their perfidy and want of good faith. In the meantime, his soldiers ravaged the plains of Nazareth, Acre, and Tyre, adding the horrors of war to those of famine, for the labours of agriculture had been suspended. Nothing appeared capable of resisting the progress of his arms; whole bodies of Christians apostatized from their faith, and, receiving horses and arms, entered into his service.

Arrived at Damascus, he summoned the Emirs of the Lebanon. They were not in a position to resist, and obeyed the mandate. He had got fresh causes of complaint against them. The Tnoohs were accused of carrying on a treasonable cor-

respondence with the Franks. Whether well grounded or not, their previous conduct fully warranted the worst suspicions; and the Sultan, ordering the Emirs Nejmaladeen and Sadadeen to be thrown into irons, marched them off under a strong escort to Cairo, to join their brother the Emir Zanadeen. Determined to make an example, that should deter the mountaineers in future from engaging in similar machinations, he sent a large body of soldiers to Abeigh and the residences of the Emirs, seized their harems and children, and gave their properties up to pillage. A less signal than this would have sufficed to have excited the cupidity of the brigands who then infested the mountains. While the soldiers burnt the castles, these carried off all their horses, cattle, and flocks, and for ten days the scene of ravage and plunder continued without interruption.

During the whole of the eventful career of Bibars, or Malek Daher, the Emirs remained in captivity. Their release was obtained without much difficulty from his son and successor, Malek Said, in whose breast his father's thirst and capability for empire, was replaced by a love of indolence and pleasure.

The ministers who surrounded him did not long, however, submit to his effeminacy and caprice. As he was deaf to all their remonstrances, they seized him, after two years' reign, and banished him to the fortress of Kerek, amidst the sands of Arabia. One of his younger brothers was, at first, chosen to succeed him. But this change did not last above a few months, for the Mameluke Kelaoun, who had been appointed Atabek, or regent, soon got rid of this phantom of a sovereign, and assumed the title of Sultan, with the surname of Malek Mansour, or the "King Invincible."

After a long series of successes against the Christians, this sovereign died at Cairo, and was succeeded by his son Malek Aschraf, who hastened to complete the work so well commenced. The new Sultan sent the most pressing orders into all the provinces, for a "*levée en masse*" of all true Mussulmen. On every side, the appeal was responded to. The warriors of Damascus, of Hamah, of the Lebanon, of the rest of Syria, of Egypt, and of Arabia, were all in movement. The forests of the Lebanon were put under contribution for the making of machines. All was disposed for the siege of Acre.

The Sultan, before beginning his march, assembled all the Cadis, readers of the Koran, and doctors of the law, in the chapel where the mortal remains of his father were deposited. All night long they read the Koran in memory of the deceased. He then gave grants of money to the people and distributed extensive charities. After having performed these acts of religion, he set out at the head of his army, determined to arouse the expiring spirit of fanaticism throughout all his dominions, for one grand and final effort against the tottering dominion of the Franks. Acre fell, after a siege of forty days. The town was entirely demolished, the ramparts thrown down, the churches razed to the ground. The towns which still remained in the hands of the Christians—such as Tyre, Tripoli, and Tortosa—were so terrified that they dared not make a moment's resistance. They were all destroyed.

Beyrout still held out. The Emir Fakaradeen Tnooh was commissioned to take possession of it. The inhabitants came out to meet him, and tendered their submission. The Emir entered into peaceable occupation, but the castle was de-

molished. The entire population became prisoners of war; the women, children, and old men, loaded with chains, were sent to Damascus, and from thence into Egypt. There the Sultan, moved with compassion at their unfortunate condition, gave them liberty, and the choice of returning to Beyrout or going to Cyprus. The greater number preferred the latter; some, however, returned to Syria, and sought refuge amongst the Maronites, where their descendants remain to this day, wholly ignorant of their origin, but with family names testifying to their Frank extraction.

The war was over. The Sultan went to Damascus. Abou'lmahcen relates—"The day of his entry into this town was a day of glory. The streets were all carpeted. The inhabitants of the surrounding country assembled in crowds to enjoy the spectacle. The Sultan made a triumphal entry, preceded by the Frank prisoners on horseback, their feet bound with thongs of the vine. Amongst the soldiers, some carried in their hands, banners of the Christians reversed; others, pikes surmounted with heads. The Sultan passed about a month at Damascus, waiting until his troops had

accomplished the occupation of the Christian provinces. When all was concluded, he returned with his army to Cairo. His entry into this capital was even more brilliant. The assemblage was immense. One would have said that all Egypt had collected to enjoy the sight." "Thus," exclaims Aboulfeda, "the territories of the Christians returned under the laws of Islam; thus was effaced the stain imprinted by the presence of the Franks. It is to God we are indebted for this great benefit. Let us be grateful, and render to the Lord our solemn thanksgivings." Ibn-ferat, closes his history with the following reflection—"The Franks, then, no longer possess anything in Syria; let us hope, please God, that so it may continue until the day of judgment."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FEW years afterwards, however, the Christians from Cyprus made an attack on Beyrout, and with such vigour that they drove out the garrison. The mountaineers of the Lebanon soon came down to support it. The Emir Sadadeen Yehya Tnooh charged the Franks with his cavalry, and endeavoured to seize their standard. His mare fell under him pierced with spears, and he was for the moment disappointed of his prize; but quickly regaining his feet, and fighting with desperate courage, he rushed sword in hand on the enemy, and finally succeeded in securing his trophy. The Franks made so precipitate a retreat, that they were driven in utter confusion into the sea, where most of them perished.

An attempt, attended with better results, was made the same year at a more southern part of the coast, by the scattered remnants of the Templars and Hospitallers. Effecting a landing, and advancing into the interior, they achieved for a short time, in concert with a body of Tartars who advanced from Damascus, the taking of Jerusalem. The success, however, was of short duration, and Syria fell back into the hands of the Moslem. Some Christian knights established themselves about the same time in the island of Aradus, or Ruad, opposite to Tortosa, and from thence made piratical descents on the neighbouring lands.

To guard against such contingencies, telegraphic communications were established from the coast to the interior, by means of watch-fires, which communicated from Beyrout to Deir el Kullah, the first point; and from thence to Bowarij, Beeris, and Salhieh, immediately above Damascus, in order to give instant intelligence of the approach of the Franks. Carrier pigeons and relays of Tartars were also called into action, to convey minute information of their motions and numbers. Even when confined to the distant position of Rhodes,

the Hospitallers did not abandon all designs upon the land of their former exploits, and more than once found secret means of entering the country.

A restless spirit of buccaneering more than anything else, prompted these aimless expeditions. If attended with no other consequences, they certainly spread alarm; for the Emir Asadeen Sadaka Tnooh, who was one of the most potent chiefs that had yet appeared in that family, and whose influence and authority spread from Tripoli to Safet, held a special commission from the government of Damascus, to watch and defend the passes between that city and Beyrout, against the Franks. It may in fact be justly surmised, that Syria was not entirely secure from the attacks, or freed from the presence of the Franks, until the year 1522, when Rhodes fell into the hands of Solyman the Great. May they soon come back, but in a better spirit and with less childish views! Not to fight about a fabulous Cross or a doubtful Sepulchre, but to advance the principles of true religion, and the best interests of humanity and civilization.

Malek Mansour and his son Malek Aschraf had carried into their operations against the Christians

in Syria, the genuine spirit of religious zeal. They fought as much to uphold the religion of Mohammed in its original form, as to enlarge and consolidate their conquests; and their example and injunctions, while they were very generally obeyed and observed, tended to make their followers mutually watchful and jealous of the purity of their faith, and of the strict observance of the rites and ceremonies which it prescribed. Malek Mansour had issued an order which was rigidly carried out, abolishing the use of wine throughout the mountains. The Sheiks of Islam had full powers to admonish, and even to punish, those who abstained from the stated forms and times of prayer, the calls to which were regular and uninterrupted, whether in camp or garrison.

Amidst such a revival, if it may be so called, of Mohammedanism, it was not likely that the population which then occupied the southern ranges of the Lebanon, could long escape the scrutinising vigilance of their Egyptian masters. And, in fact, the Emirs of the House of Tnooh, together with the various branches of that family, and the numerous dependents and retainers who adhered to

them, did not fail to excite their attention and suspicions. In vain the Emir Zanadeen, on his return from Egypt, erected a mosque at Aramoon, and even sent some Emirs of his family on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The laxity and indifference of the Druses, notwithstanding an outward and compulsory observance of the rites of Mohammedanism, became too manifest to be misunderstood. And no sooner had Malek Aschraf returned to Cairo, after having rid himself of his Frank opponents, than he determined openly to attack a sect, whose active and pressing services he now no longer required. An order was sent to Ukwash el Ufram, the governor of Damascus, to call upon the Druses to erect mosques throughout the mountains, and to maintain a strict observance of all the doctrines of the Koran.

Departing in this instance—and it is the only one in their history—from their usual spirit of caution and compliance, nay, deviating from an acknowledged principle of their religion, they openly refused. But it must be remembered, that they were already a people strong in numbers, and respectable in the wealth and property of their

chiefs. The House of Tnooh might well, by its position and influence in the Lebanon, aspire to more than a nominal independence. They had Beyrout, as the Maans had Sidon. The latter, it is true, were in practice as well as profession, Mussulmen, but they were allied to the Tnoohs by ties of marriage, and a community of interests detained them from taking any active part, in the impending struggle.

An expedition of 40,000 men advanced from Damascus into the mountain. The Druses flew to arms, and amounting to nearly 10,000, headed by eleven Emirs, met the enemy, and gave them battle at Ain Sofar, a village standing on a plateau, about half-way between Beyrout and the Bekaa. They were defeated. Some of the Emirs, escaping down the nearest valley of the Metten, stopped not till they reached Unt-Elias, which is close to the shore, between Beyrout and the Dog River, and there secreted themselves in the cave of Neebay. The direction they had taken was soon discovered. They were followed up and blockaded. Terms were offered to them if they would surrender, but they resolutely held out, either from hopes of

relief from without, or from a proud feeling of preferring death, to the insult and contumely which would no doubt have attended their submission. The soldiers built up the mouth of the cave with huge blocks of stone, and they all perished. The successful troops devastated the mountain. Castles were dismantled, villages burnt, property destroyed, and the vineyards, which seemed particularly marked out for destruction, rooted out and laid waste.

A considerable time elapsed before the Druses recovered this blow, and many families emigrated to the plains of the Houran. The government did not follow up its success by any farther measures of persecution. A growing power had been enfeebled, and the punishment inflicted on the sectarians, seemed to have appeased for the time, even the zealots of Islamism. The supremacy of the Sultan of Egypt had been amply maintained, and ten years afterwards, the Druses received and submitted to a firman from Cairo, making a fresh division in their feudal appanages, and giving to every Emir by name, the villages and districts which had been appointed to him. The Emir

Nusaradeen Hosein Tnooh rebuilt and enlarged the family castle at Abeigh, and the mountains, by degrees resumed their wonted aspect.

A long period of comparative peace and security ensued, during which the Druses increased in numbers and importance. The Tnooh Emirs appear to have applied themselves considerably to science and literature, such as it was in those days. Reading and writing became common even amongst the females, and in this respect, the harems of the Druse Sheiks, even to this day, maintain a marked superiority over the rest of their sex throughout the country. The names of a long line of Emirs occur in the Arabic manuscripts, who each excelled in some branch of education; some as poets, theologians, and grammarians; others as astrologers, artificers, and historians; making large collections of books, and multiplying copies by the most laboured and beautiful efforts of penmanship.

Many directed their attention towards perfecting their breed of horses, and delighted in giving them the most costly and gorgeous attire; covering the housings with silver and gold ornaments of their own personal manufacturing, being expert goldsmiths.

All were remarkable for their generosity and hospitality. Throughout the whole of the fifteenth century, their power and influence gradually increased. That of the Emir Asadeen, as has been already observed, extended from Tripoli to Safet. The Emir Zanadeen Omar repaired the Castle of Beyrout, and making that town his principal residence, used to hold a kind of a court there, which used to be attended by most of the principal chiefs of the Lebanon, who received from his hands, pelisses and clothes, and other marks of honour; a tacit acknowledgment of his superior authority, and an unequivocal testimony of the esteem and consideration, which the House of Tnooh at that epoch enjoyed. In fact, it was then at its zenith.

No longer disturbed in the private exercises of their own religion, the Druses cautiously abstained from any open profession, and readily accommodated themselves as occasion required, to the external symbols of that of Mohammedanism.

It was reserved for the Emir Jemaladeen Said Abdallah Tnooh, to give the system and doctrines of Hamzé, an impetus, and to procure for them an extent of circulation and observance, which they

had never, perhaps, hitherto possessed, and which he pressed forward with a vigilance and enthusiasm, unknown amongst his predecessors. The memory of this venerable Ockal is so enthroned in the hearts of his votaries, that to this hour, hundreds of Druses of both sexes go yearly to visit the shrine at Abeigh, (in the interior of which a magnificent lamp is continually kept burning, night and day,) with the firm conviction, that the most beneficial results will arise to them, from this act of piety and devotion. At times, the harems of the Druse Sheiks may be seen mounted on horses and mares, preceded and surrounded by a long suite of attendants, denoting their superior rank, proceeding in the direction of Abeigh. The passer by will naturally pause to see the procession, which is sufficiently attractive and picturesque; but perhaps may be surprised to observe, should be be inclined to scrutinize, that the ladies are without their shoes.* They are on a pilgrimage to the Said Abdallah, and this mark of humility is indispensably requisite.

That this Emir was exemplary in his duties to

* Sometimes the pilgrimage is performed by ladies, walking bare-footed.

religion, the accounts which have been transmitted of his character and general conduct, leave not a doubt. Grave and serious in his discourse, and rarely omitting an occasion of drawing the attention of his hearers to the grand and primary duties of this life, as connected with their duties towards God. The perusal of the sacred works of his own sect, seemed to have been his leading and absorbing passion. The Koran also was generally at his side, and he earnestly recommended that it should be constantly read and studied; in what manner and to what end, will be understood when the Druse religion comes to be examined and explained. It is said that he knew it off by heart, and could repeat all its chapters without making a mistake. Books of history, poetry, and grammar, were likewise objects of his research, and his library counted upwards of 500 volumes.

Nor was his love of learning merely a selfish occupation. He delighted, and made it a duty, to impart knowledge to others. One day in every week, was scrupulously set apart to the purpose of instruction, and his grand divan on that occasion assumed the appearance of a seminary. Adults,

but more particularly those of the class of Ockals, or sober-minded, came from the most distant parts of the mountain, to avail themselves of the benefits of his discourse, and to fathom to the utmost, under his tuition, the mysterious tenets of their religion. The style of allegory in which these tenets were portrayed, charmed by its very abstruseness, and the initiated never doubted but that a system of theology, so remote in its deductions, so refined in its allusions, and so far above the ordinary grasp of the human understanding, was the result of a divine intercourse infinitely exceeding in extent, grandeur, and sublimity, the revelations which had been vouchsafed to the Prophet himself.

The zeal of the Emir was even more than sedentary. Traversing the mountains in all directions, and going from village to village, he established schools, and ordered Holowés, or places of worship, to be erected; appointing, at the same time, the most advanced of his disciples as teachers of religion. The use of wine was strictly prohibited; and even the sale of raisins was restricted, lest they might afford temptation for the distilling of spirituous liquors. His scruples were carried to

a rigid extreme, refusing to partake of the meals of the ordinary Emirs of his family, under an apprehension, that the sources of their revenue might not be strictly warrantable, and arising from acts of oppression or injustice. In this respect sanctioning, if not originating, a principle which is to this day invariably acted upon by the Ockals of the Druses.

Visiting Damascus on one occasion, he alighted at the house of Ibn Kussieh, a sheik of Islam, who gave him the most friendly welcome. In the course of a conversation, his host said to him: "Emir, are there true Mussulmen in your country?" He replied, "Certainly there are; and they read the Koran." "Well, then," said his host, "let us hear how you pray." "Who is without prayer?" answered the Emir. "But how should one pray?" inquired Kussieh. After a short pause, the Emir said, "When I enter the House of God, I endeavour to do so with pure thoughts and a clean heart, and call out—'There is no god but God, and Mohammed the Prophet of God.' I listen to the words of the Book, with an earnest and teachable spirit. I kneel down in

contrition and penitence; and, bowing down my head, kiss the earth; praying that I may be enabled to walk in humility and the fear of God, and to resign myself in all things to His will and decrees; to think that Heaven is on my right hand, and Hell on my left; and to bear in mind, that, wherever I go, I am always in the presence of God; and that He is ever before me. That is enough." His host, turning to his company, exclaimed, "All your prayers compared to that are useless."

It was a favourite saying of the Emir's, "Let wisdom and instruction lead you; let the fear of God be your counsel; and let mildness and charity be your ruler." One day, he was out walking, accompanied by some of his disciples, and came to a high rock surmounted by trees, the roots of which had penetrated to its very basis, perforating into the minutest crevices. Drawing their attention to the object, he observed, "Even so are our sins. Let no one think his sins trivial, and of no importance, for they will imperceptibly penetrate into and possess the heart, even as these roots have gradually cleft their way into the solid rock."

With him, strictness of life, was not deemed

inconsistent with the duties his rank exacted towards society. He exercised an unlimited hospitality; and the poor and oppressed ever found him ready to relieve their wants, and espouse their interests. Such was his reputation for wisdom and integrity, that parties would come from the greatest distances, to have their disputes settled before him. His award was final and conclusive, and accepted by both sides with cheerfulness and satisfaction. He died in the year 1480. The entire population of the Druses attended his funeral, and his loss was long and deservedly deplored.

The conspicuous position which the House of Tnooh held at the period in which he flourished, combined, together with his own personal rank and station, to make his learning, character, and example, exercise a permanent influence over the Druses; and his memory is dear to them, not merely because he was a singular ornament to their religion, but because his name stands connected with an epoch, to which they revert with mingled feelings of pride and sadness; inasmuch as it awakens in their minds, recollections of a power

and ascendency in the Lebanon, which has departed from them for ever.

The description of the qualities and principles of the eminent individual, whose character has just been sketched, naturally leads to an examination of the faith and doctrines, of which he was so ardent and distinguished a champion.

CHAPTER XV.

THE founder of the sect of the Druses was Hamzé, the son of Ali, the son of Achmed, a native of Khorasan, in Persia, an Ismaeli, or Batenian.* Without denying to him the merit of originality in the hierarchy which he founded, yet, since he established his doctrines on tenets of religion which had long been prevalent in the East, it will be as well, in order to understand how his system came to be accepted at all, to make a short sketch of the state of the Mohammedan world before he appeared.

The immediate disciples and companions of the Prophet, received the Koran in its plain and literal sense. They never indulged in abstruse disqui-

* Ismaeli and Batenian are synonymous terms, meaning, a believer in the allegorical, or concealed interpretation of the Koran. The term Batenian springs from the Arabic word "*Baatn*," "within."

sitions, as to the nature and attributes of the Deity. These they understood exactly as they are expressed in the Koran, without any attempt at allegorical explanations; and they relied on that book, unaided and alone, to demonstrate the Unity of the Godhead, and the truth of Mohammed's mission.

The first open attempt to break the simplicity and the harmony of this system, was made by Maabed, son of Khaled Djohni, a disciple of the school of Hasan Basri, of Busra. He struck at one leading and fundamental principle of the Koran, by teaching the doctrine of Free-will. He was put to the torture and hung for this heresy, by order of the Caliph Abdalmelek, son of Merwan, in A.D. 704. The schism, notwithstanding, rapidly spread, and obtained numerous adherents; so much so, that even the contemporaries of the Prophet had occasion to denounce the innovation in the strongest terms, and to warn the faithful against having any communication with those who upheld it. The latter, on their part, taunted their adversaries with the blasphemous inconsistency of shedding men's blood, and daring, at the same

time, to maintain that all our actions are fore-ordained by the inevitable decree of God.

Already were the Mussulmen divided into two great parties, one of which, and by far the most numerous, maintained the rights of Ali, the husband of Fatima, Mohammed's daughter, to the Sovereign Pontificate, whose temporal power was merely an accessory, though a necessary and indispensable one; while the other, after having given the preference, in the first place, to the three companions of the Prophet, Abou Becr, Omar, and Othman, refused to listen to the general voice in favour of Ali, and rallied round the standard of Moawia, whose pretensions to the crown were based solely on his private ambition, and the spirit of revolt. It is true, they were headed by Ayescha, the beloved wife of the Prophet, and the sworn enemy of Ali; but the more her credit and influence seemed to countenance this faction, the greater inducement had the partisans of Ali, to embrace whatever might tend to exalt the dignity and the rights, of the cousin and son-in-law of the Apostle of God; of him who could alone, in fact, conserve an offspring of the blood of Mohammed.

The Schiis, as these were called, soon began to adopt the most extravagant opinions on his account. Yet Ali, whether from weakness, or the love of peace, or from the hopes of seeing union gradually restored, failed to avail himself of the powerful support which the fanatical attachment of his followers might have afforded him. In place of employing his arms against his real enemies, and against an adversary with whom any measures would have been justifiable, he turned them against the warmest of his own adherents, anathematizing, and even burning to death, some of those whose outrageous zeal led them to claim for him a more than mortal veneration. He fell, ere long, a victim to the treachery and wickedness of his rival, and, with him, his family. Moawia, erecting his throne on the mangled bodies of the founders of Islamism, was acknowledged, and his descendants after him, as the depositary of legitimate power. But if the talents of Moawia, his activity, the glory of his arms, and the brilliant conquests of his generals, were rewarded by the sincere submission of the Western provinces of the empire, it was far otherwise in those of the East.

His successors, in vain endeavoured to establish there, even the semblance of adherence and acquiescence. The strong hand of tyranny and oppression might effect a temporary obedience amongst the people, but attachment to the House of Ali had sunk deep into their hearts. The misfortunes of that family, in whose veins flowed the blood of the Prophet, the persecutions to which they had ever been exposed on the part of the Caliphs of the House of Omaya, and even from the greater number of those of the House of Abbas, perpetuated, augmented, and carried to the highest degree, the spirit of enthusiasm and fanaticism, amongst men to whom the yoke of the usurpers was an intolerable burden. And thus every time that a descendant of Ali wished to raise the standard of revolt in the Eastern provinces, he found minds ready to take his part and make good his pretensions.

Hence those civil wars which spread sometimes to the most distant parts of the Empire, from the Oxus and the Caspian sea to the shores of the Mediterranean, and even the Atlantic. Moreover, the party feeling which induced Mussulmen to take

up arms against their co-religionists, was so mixed up with passion and resentment, as not to admit always of a calm investigation of the claims of those, who presented themselves with the venerated title of Imam, and descendant of Ali; and more than one impostor availed himself of this blind tendency to credulity, to advance his projects of fortune and aggrandizement.

The name of Ali was a rallying point for all the disturbers of the dominion of the Caliphs. Every Imam who could cover his revolt with this respected name, was a privileged man, and in the eyes of a fanatical multitude, participated in the incommunicable rights of Divinity; for this latter tenet which had been so vigorously suppressed by Ali himself, was far too valuable to be lost sight of, and had become unscrupulously put forward by his partizans, after his death. The principal of these, was Abdallah the son of Wahab, the son of Saba, who it is believed, was originally a Jew. He taught that the Prophet had designated the Imamat to Ali, to whom by consequence appertained, formally and explicitly, the title and rank of the successor and vicar of the Apostle of God, for the government of

his people. According to him, Ali had not been killed, he was still living; in him resided a particle of the Divinity; the thunder was his voice, and the lightning his scourge, and he would one day return upon earth, to establish equity and justice.

The school of Hasan Basri likewise gave rise to the sect of Motozalles, which appeared about the beginning of the 8th century of the Christian æra. Besides denying the doctrine of predestination, they rejected the dogma believed in by all true Mussulmen, that the body underwent an examination and even a torture in the sepulchre; maintained that the Koran was created, and had a beginning; that God would not be visible even in the next life, and various other propositions peculiar to their sect. Their principles gained numerous partizans, and they composed a great number of works in the form of dialectic controversies, for the propagation and defence of their opinions.

Next appeared the Keramites, so named after Mohammed, the son of Keram, who defended the existence of the Divine attributes, and even went so far as to give God a body and form like those of his creatures. He was the Imam of the two sects

of Schafiés and Hanafiés. But it was reserved for the Karmatians, about the year of our Lord 874, to project and carry forward by the force of conquests, a system of theology which broke down all the remaining barriers of orthodoxy, and opened wide the flood gates to innovations of every kind. The founder of this sect was Hamdan, the son of Aschath, surnamed Karmat, on account of his dwarfish stature, and contracted feet, which only enabled him to take very short steps. This personage appeared in Busra, and his doctrines, which he drew from the sect of Ismaelis, spread first in Irak.

Abou Said of Djenaba,* shortly after pronounced himself one of his followers, and as his power and that of his children was very considerable, the Karmatians under their auspices assumed a formidable position. They defeated the armies of Bagdad, and carried terror into the very Court of the Abassides. They imposed annual contributions on the inhabitants of Khorasan, of Syria, of Egypt, and Yemen, whither they carried the success of their arms. Their missionaries spread on every

* Djenaba is opposite to Karac, in the Persian Gulf.

side, and thousands were initiated by them into the mysteries of their new religion, as it might almost be called, which they styled "the knowledge of the interior meaning." This consisted in allegorizing the precepts of the Koran, and substituting, in place of their external observance, fanciful explanations which did away with them altogether; also, in giving forced interpretations to certain phrases in that book, so as to suit their own theories, and to give countenance to the ideas which they put forth.

These sophistries had undoubtedly been engendered, by the perusal of the books of Greek philosophy which had been sent for and translated into Arabic, by the Sultan Mamoun Abdallah, son of Haroun Raschid. When the disposition to cavil, and even to scepticism, which these works taught men to emulate, had once been introduced into the East, the voice of controversy supplanted that of authority; and what had hitherto been accepted and believed, without dispute or discussion, on the word of the Koran, was carried to the tribunal of human reason, which became the sole judge deemed competent to regulate and direct belief. To reject

the Koran altogether, however, would have been too hazardous an experiment. The prejudices and passions of the people might have been aroused; and as the object of sectarianism was to gain adherents, not to make enemies, the leaders of the various parties, who from the beginning of the ninth century disturbed the religious repose of Islamism, readily adopted a plan which enabled them, without cost or trouble, and restrained by no rules, to find in its words whatever tenet, dogma, or principle, it suited their interests to discover.

The Karmatians, more than any others, put this new scheme into vogue, and supported it by an extensive plan of proselytism. With them, men of all religions were acceptable, provided their numbers augmented, and by consequence, the credit, power, and resources of their sect. Nothing was so well calculated to achieve this end, as a system of allegory which could be applied indifferently, to the law of Moses, the Gospel, and the Koran. All men, however, were not equally susceptible of the impressions which they sought to communicate. Age, education, prejudice, difference of temperaments, the infinite variety of passions, required

that different paths should be taken, to arrive at the same result.

Thus, their missionaries were instructed to be Schiis with the partizans of Ali; Sunnis, with the Sunni; Christian or Jew, bigot or libertine, bold or timid, according to the character of those they endeavoured to gain over. They were only to unfold the doctrines of their sect by degrees, and the process of instruction was to be divided into gradations. One thing only was vigorously exacted as a condition of admittance to their ranks; a blind obedience to their chiefs and his delegates, and a consecration of all natural faculties and means, to the execution of his orders. The Fatimite Caliphs, whose power originated in Africa and Morocco, made public profession of the doctrines of the Ismaelis, and sent their emissaries into Egypt, where they made considerable progress. In the year, A.D. 971, having become masters of Egypt, they sent their armies into Syria.

Countenanced by the example of the ruling power, the spirit of sectarianism now knew no bounds. The Kadris, the Djhamis, the Motozales, the Keramites, the Karedjis, the Rafedhis, the

Karmatians, the Batenians, and numerous other sects, inundated all the provinces of Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Diarbecr, Coufa, Busra, Bagdad, and spread through the wide extent of Irak, Khorasan, Hejaz, Yemen, and Bahrein. Books of philosophy were their favourite study. Selecting and comparing what pleased or suited them most, in the abstruse disquisitions which these books contained, a sudden conceit or a novel version of any particular passage, was greedily caught up as a new light—a fresh standard was uplifted, and a new sect, set on foot and organized.

To enter into any examination of the doctrines put forth by these religious enthusiasts, would be here misplaced and unprofitable, and only those need be briefly alluded to, which tend to show from whence Hamzé drew the materials for his system. Achmet, the son of Habit, whose followers were called Habitites, admitted two Gods—one eternal, the other created; and this latter was Jesus, the son of Mary. He taught that Jesus was the Son of God, and that it was he who at the latter day would judge men for their actions; founding this opinion on a passage of the Koran, which says,

"What do they expect, but that God should come to them in a covering of clouds." Again, where it is written, "You shall see your Lord in Paradise, as when you beheld the moon in the day of Bedr;"* according to him, it was Jesus Christ to whom the prophet alluded.

He adopted also the dogma of metempsychosis. He said that God commenced the creation in Paradise, and that those who left it were driven out for their sins. He blamed the great number of wives of the prophet, as an unwarrantable libertinage. He taught that virtue and vice meet with their recompence in this world; and that misery or happiness were dependent on our good or bad actions. Lastly, he maintained the successive incarnation of the Spirit of God in the Imams. A tenet of the Moammerites, or disciples of Mohammed, son of Abbad Salami, one of the Motozales, was, that the word "Kadeem" should not be used to express the eternity of God, because this word proceeds from the root "Kadama," or "anterior being;" and it will be seen that Hamzé lays it

* The battle of Bedr was one of the Prophet's most important victories.

down, that "Kadeem" does not signify God, but the first of his creations—"the Universal Intelligence."

One of the most considerable of the many sects of the Rafedhis, is that of the Katebites, followers of Abou-il-Khatib Mohammed. They belong to the class of Anthropomorphists, and have a boundless veneration for the Imam Djafar Sadeek, to whom, according to the Ismaelis, the Imamat, rightfully descended. They allowed the usage of wine, of fornication, and of all things prohibited by the law, and denied the necessity of prayer. Their licentious doctrines were the natural consequence of the allegorical explanations, which they substituted for the literal and plain meaning of the texts of the Koran. They believed that Djafar was God, and worshipped him at Coufa. They believed also that he had left, as a sacred deposit, a skin called "Jiffir," which contained all that was needful for them to understand of hidden and obscure things, and to lead them to a right interpretation of the Koran.

According to them, in these words of the Koran, "God ordains you to immolate a cow," Ayescha was alluded to. The idols therein, named Djebit

and Tagout, are Moawia and his general Amoon. All the laws of the Koran, which interdict the use of animals who have died a natural death, drinking of wine, the eating of blood, of pork, &c., are merely figurative expressions to denote certain individuals, such as Abou Becr, Omar, Othman, and Moawia; and all the obligations imposed, designate metaphorically certain personages who are to be held in veneration and attachment, such as Ali, Hasan, Hosein, and their children. The Dhemmis recognised Ali and Mohammed as Gods, and gave precedence to the latter. Others make the Divinity to be equally distributed, and equally resident, in Mohammed, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hosein.

It was not exclusively the partizans of Ali, and of the Imams descended from him, who contested the sovereignty with Moawia and the other Caliphs of the House of Omayya. Before the close of the first century after the Hegira, a powerful party arose, principally in the Eastern provinces of the Empire, in favour of the descendants of Abbas, uncle of the prophet. This party refused to recognise Abou Becr, Omar, and Othman, as the legiti-

mate successors of Mohammed. According to them, this right belonged to Abbas, making an exception, however, in favour of Ali. The Abassides had established a mission like the Schiis, and raised contributions and sent out missionaries, to increase the number of their adherents. They also maintained, like the partizans of Ali, the successive infusion of the Divinity, or of a particle of the Divine essence, in the pontiffs of the race of Abbas.

The warmest supporters of this family were in Khorasan; and it was principally to the devotion and talents of that able general, Abou Moslem, assisted by the corruption of the descendants of Moawia, and the hatred which they excited, that the Abassides were indebted for their elevation to the throne. So general was the spirit of schism and independence in the ranks of Islamism, that even those who embraced with the greatest ardour and zeal the party of the Abassides, failed not ere long to become themselves broken up and divided. The victories of Abou Moslem had so far dazzled many of them, that a sect arose in Khorasan, called Moslemites, who recognised him as the Imam. This

sect was again split up into two parties after his death, one asserting that he had not died, but only disappeared, while the other, assured of his death, recognised as Imam his daughter Fatima.

A short time afterwards, a man of the same country imposed on the credulity of the people. He is thus spoken of by Makrizi. "There arose," says he, "in the canton of Kiseh, in the province of Ma-wara-el-Nahr, a man from Merou, who was one-eyed, and whose name was Haschem. This man gave out that Abou Selma, who had been received as Imam by the Moslemites,—was God; the Spirit of God having entered into him; and that after Abou Selma, it was he himself who had received an infusion of the Divinity. His doctrines spread abroad, and he obtained believers. For the purpose of enveloping himself with the greatest degree of awe and mystery, he always appeared veiled before his disciples, and wore a golden mask, which procured him the name of Mokhana. They having asked him one day to show them his face, he declared his willingness to do so, if they would guarantee that they could look on him, without being consumed and burnt. In the mean time,

he had taken his measures for receiving them, by placing in front of himself a large and brightly polished brazen mirror, directly opposite the rays of the sun. When they entered to behold him, some of them were nearly dazzled to blindness by the force of the radiance which burst upon them, while others effected a precipitate retreat. Seduced by this artifice, they remained convinced that he was God, and that the eyes of mortals could not withstand his glance. In their wars, they declared his Divinity; and no doubt craved his assistance and protection."

Enough has been advanced to show that there was no opinion, however monstrous or absurd it might be, however opposed to the clearest and most explicit texts of the Koran, however irreconcileable with the precepts and dogmas of the Mohammedan religion,* which might not have found partizans within its pale, and even claimed as its authority, and challenged as its sanction, the Sacred book itself.

* A detailed account of the Mohammedan sects, is to be found in the *Introduction* to Baron Sylvestre de Sacy's work, *La Religion des Druses,* from which the author has made extracts.

CHAPTER XVI.

In the rapid and necessarily imperfect sketch which has just been made, the principal dogmas which characterize the system of Hamzé have been alluded to;—the infusion of the Divinity into the Imans; the transmigration of souls; the allegorical interpretation of all the precepts of the Koran, and the disappearance and expected return of the Imam, to whom the Divinity is united.

A number of instances might be brought forward to show, that during the four centuries immediately following the Hegira, more than one innovator took advantage of the inclination of the people for these singular ideas, and successively wielded them to form a party against the Caliphs. It is highly probable, that the ancient doctrines of

Magism contributed largely to promote and facilitate their acceptance, and might indeed have been the primary source from whence they sprung. For, as has been remarked, it was in the Eastern provinces of the empire of the successors of Mohammed, that they originally appeared, and were the most zealously maintained.

It is there that they were constantly attacked and suppressed; and as constantly broke out afresh. The disciples and followers of Zoroaster, accustomed to behold in their kings and priests, descendants of the gods, celestial genii, and deities of inferior rank, could not have found it very repugnant to their long-accustomed modes of belief, to transfer to the chiefs of the new religion, that veneration which they had been wont to accord to their own sovereigns. The system of the two principles even, is not altogether foreign to the religion of the Druses, since their books contain clear and unequivocal allusions to a powerful Rival, opposed to the "Universal Intelligence;" an actual Ahriman, in constant collision with Ormuzd, the immediate creation of God, and the source of all good and all knowledge.

Before entering on the life of Hakem, a consideration of the doctrines of the Ismaelis will not be displaced. This sect appeared about 148 years after the Hegira, the epoch of the death of the Imam Djafar. The Ismaelis belonged to the general class of Rafedhís, or those who professed an exclusive attachment for Ali and his descendants, with a cordial and implacable hatred against Abou Becr, Omar, Othman, and Moawia, whom they regarded as usurpers. Their external rites and practices were those of the Schiis. Their name denotes that they were the party who rallied round Ismael, whom they recognised as their Imam, and who was the son of Djafar Sadeek.

It appears that, before the conquest of Africa by the Fatimite Caliphs, the Ismaelis had already acknowledged seven Imams, as personages through whom the right to the Imamat, and the participation of the Divine nature, had been transmitted to Obeidallah, the first of that dynasty.

In a book of the Druses, entitled "On the division of knowledge," they are called the concealed Imams, because they were obliged to secrete them-

selves, to avoid the persecutions of the Abassides. The Imams mentioned by the Druses are, however, different from those of the Ismaelis. Ahmed, the fifth of these Imams, according to the Druses, occupied that office in the year 278 of the Hegira; but the doctrines of the sect had been reduced to a system, and received a regular form, a few years before, under his father Abdallah, the son of Maimoun. The character of this latter personage may almost be taken as typical of that of Hamzé. The craftiness of his advances on the intellect of those whom he sought to proselytise, and the tortuous paths through which he glided to obtain his ends, if they were not copied by that sectarian, were singularly coincident with the mode of operations which he laid down and pursued. The latter stands vindicated, however, from promulgating tenets at variance with the best feelings of nature, and repugnant to the most ordinary principles of morality.

"Abdallah," says Makrizi, "knew the professions of every religion, and every sect. He instituted a code of doctrines, divided into seven degrees of initiation, through which the proselyte

had successively to pass, until, at the end, throwing off all the restraints of religion, he became a complete materialist, ceasing to recognise the existence of God, or to believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, and setting at defiance all moral rules of conduct. He called on the Mussulmen to acknowledge as Imam, Mohammed, the son of Ismael, the son of Djafar Sadeek; but this was merely to conceal his ulterior designs, and attract to himself a powerful party from amongst the Schiis, and more particularly the Ismaelis; for a man whose object was to propagate materialism, atheism, and immorality, would not in reality be very scrupulous, whether a descendant of Ali, or any other, was recognised as Imam. What he wanted, was a means of exciting the people against their sovereign. His pretended zeal for the race of Ali was merely a plausible pretext, and so much the more effective, as it was covered with the veil of religion."

He had been obliged to fly successively from Ahwaz and Busra, and settled finally at Salamia in Syria, where he died, and was succeeded by his son Achmed, who became chief of the Ismaelis.

Before the time of Abdallah, the Ismaelis had merely been an ordinary sect of the Schiis; but when he became their chief, their doctrines, under his guidance, assumed a character which tended to annihilate all the precepts of the Mohammedan religion. Two celebrated Arabic authors, Makrizi and Nowairi, have entered at large into the details of Abdallah's system. This latter author drew his materials from a work composed by Abou Hasan Mohammed, the son of Ali, who was a contemporary of Obeidallah, the first of the Fatimite Caliphs, and himself a descendant of Djafar Sadeek. His statement, therefore, may be considered authentic.

So curious are the details into which he enters, and so singular is the history of this specimen of Oriental Jesuitism, if the anachronism may be excused, that an abridged account will be interesting.

"When the teacher wishes to make a man his proselyte, he begins by proposing him questions with regard to the meaning of certain passages in the Koran, as to the spiritual signification of various ordinances of the law, and as to a few objects which appertain to physical science. If

the teacher finds in the person whom he thus addresses, a man of intellect, well instructed, and accustomed to argument, he accommodates himself to his opinions; proffers to him all kinds of deference and regard, praises his observations, and insinuates himself into his good graces, by showing himself familiar on every subject which is most attractive and pleasing to him, and possessed of a perfect knowledge of the doctrines which he professes.

"This he does out of prudence, lest his designs may be divined—lest injurious reports should be spread against him, and for fear his office as a missionary may be discovered, and his secret betrayed. Should he, on the contrary, encounter a man of plain and ordinary capacity, he enters into a conversation fitted to captivate all his attention. He hints to him that religion is a concealed science, that the greater part of men are ignorant of, or misunderstand it; that if Mussulmen only knew what degree of knowledge God had imparted to the Imams, by a special favour, there would not be such a diversity of opinions amongst them.

"The curiosity of the person thus addressed is

excited; he readily imagines that the teacher is in possession of some rare and profound acquirements, and conceives a strong desire to know the meaning of his mysterious allusions. The latter proceeds to draw his attention to the signification of various texts in the Koran, which he contrives to render in a way which he knows will be agreeable to his hearer, and descants on various other subjects, with a fluency and profundity which leave no doubt of his superior attainments; thus preparing the mind to receive successive communications as to its religious interests, with patience and docility.

" The teacher then insinuates, that what has caused the misfortunes of Mussulmen, corrupted their belief, given rise to a multitude of sects, and established the empire of those passions which have led men astray, is the infidelity of which they have been guilty, in abandoning the Imams who had been given to them, to watch over the conservation of the laws and doctrines of Islamism, and to preserve on the earth their secret interpretation and interior meaning. In refusing to follow the directions of the Imams, men have arrogantly attempted to judge of matters by the light of

reason, admitting or rejecting according to the dictates of their own judgment, or that of chosen leaders and chiefs who basely attach themselves to kings and courts, for their own private purposes; whose only end is their own personal importance and advancement; whose interests are wholly worldly; and who, in order to exercise power and dominion over a few, stealthily rob the *Vicar of God* of the people which belong to him, falsify and misinterpret the sacred book which is in his keeping, and reject the *doctrines founded on tradition, of which he and his predecessors have been the sacred depositary.*

" Holding the tone of a sincere well-wisher and adviser, he proceeds to say, that the doctrines of the religion of Mohammed are not calculated to flatter the passions of men by a brilliant and seducing exterior; or, on the other hand, easily appreciable, and capable of being *expressed in every tongue*, and within the grasp of every ordinary understanding; that, on the contrary, religion is a difficult and abstruse matter, profound in its meaning, veiled over by the wings of the Almighty, and a matter of far too great importance to be

abandoned to the profane use of the wicked, inasmuch as it is the sealed secret of God, and his impenetrable mystery; that only an Angel of the first class, or a prophet charged with a Divine mission, or one of the faithful, whose heart has been proved by God, can bear the burden or support the weight of so sublime a science.

"All the missionaries of the sect advance these and various other topics, for the same purpose—that of imposing on their auditors, until by degrees the latter begin to look on them with admiration, and to suspect that all other men with whom they have hitherto associated, are impious and profane. But these discourses are merely a prelude, to familiarize, as it were, those whom they are seeking to seduce, and to dispose them not to be surprised or offended with what is subsequently to be developed.

"Conversations are frequently promoted on such subjects as, the doctrines of free will and predestination, which give occasion for the display of fine-spun theories, and the most artful sophistry; questions are put on the most knotty points of theology, which induce a flow of explanations,

clothed in a style of eloquence redounding with terms of logic and philosophy, and giving the impression of deep and laborious study and research, until at length, the auditory begin to conceive the most exalted idea of what they are about to learn.

" Then, with an artifice not unlike those charlatans who tell tales to the populace, and on purpose to keep up an interest, abruptly break off in the midst of a story—they will suddenly dissolve a meeting or postpone an argument, satisfied for the time with having created a feeling of wonder and curiosity. Should any of the hearers press them for further explanations, the Missionary thus replies:—" Take care not to be too hasty in such matters as these; the religion of God is of far too great a value to be intrusted to those who are not worthy, and to be exposed thus to be lightly and frivolously treated. Those who would penetrate its mysteries, must be first prepared to make a vow and engagement; for God has always acted in this way towards those whom he intrusted with a mission, as it is said in the Koran—' We have taken an engagement from the prophets, from thee, from

Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary, we have taken from them a very strong engagement;'" and there are numerous other passages of the same import and tendency. "Engage yourself, then, striking your right hand in mine, and promise me, with the most inviolable oaths and assurances, that you will never divulge our secret, that you will never aid or assist any one, whoever he may be, against us; that you will never lay any snare for us, and that you will speak to us nothing but the truth on all occasions."

"In acting thus, the missionaries propose various objects. The first is to discover, by the external signs of submission and acquiescence which the proselyte evinces, the degree of trouble and perplexity which they have flung into his mind, and what impression their discourses have made upon him. Another object is, to assure themselves that their secret will not be betrayed, nor their plan divulged; at least, until they shall have prepared and disposed every thing, by degrees, for the success of their designs.

"Again, they wish thus early to accustom the proselyte to a blind and passive obedience, to allow

himself to be led by them at their goodwill and pleasure, to obey their orders without reasoning, and to regard them with feelings of profound respect and veneration. On the other hand, the doctrine which they profess, teaches, *that oaths may be broken and counted for nothing, when once the object they have in view is gained.* They only employ oaths and promises, therefore, as a means of binding the disciples of other sects, so long as these have any scruples remaining, or feel themselves obliged to adhere to the dictates of piety.

"If the proselyte consents to take the oath required of him; if, in consequence of his uneasiness and uncertainty of mind, he humbly submits to what is proposed, the missionary says—'Give us then a pledge out of your goods, as an earnest of your sincerity, as a preliminary to the revelation we are about to make to you, and the knowledge we are going to impart to you.' This is another method they have of probing the temper and disposition of the proselyte, and of ascertaining how far he may be counted upon, for the furtherance and promotion of their views. The missionary fixes the amount of his contribution, according to

his known means and circumstances. If he refuses to contract the engagement, or if, after having contracted, he refuses to pay, the missionary makes him no further communications, and leaves him a prey to his doubts, and the cares of a troubled spirit.

"In the second degree of initiation, when the proselyte has adopted all that had been previously taught him, and become perfectly convinced that those who have followed *the teaching of other doctors, have been led into error*, he is shown that the fulfilment even of the duties of man towards God, and of the commandments which he has imposed, fail of being acceptable to Him, unless the knowledge of his doctrine is received through the *medium of the Imams*, to whom He has given authority over men, and to whom is entrusted the charge of watching over the conservation of his laws, and of seeing that they are obeyed in conformity to His will. In the demonstration of this part of their system, they found their arguments on the grounds of *authority and tradition*, until the proselyte becomes completely convinced.

"The third degree informs the proselyte what he

is to believe with respect to the Imams. We have found, they say, in the Imam whom we acknowledge as our chief, Mohammed, the son of Ismael, the son of Djafar, the knowledge of all secret things, and the real inward interpretation of all known dogmas, and we find nothing of the sort in any other but him. Our Chief professes the secret of the mystery of God in his unfathomable ways. Of all the sects of the Schiis, we alone inherit the key to the truth, and we alone can communicate it, for we hold it, *by tradition*, from God, and from those with whom our rivals cannot find one to compare, in respect of wisdom and attainments. Then they spread all kinds of false reports about the other children of Djafar, saying this against one and that against another—accusations entirely false and without foundation. None of them are exempt from reproach of some kind, they say, except him whom we recognise as our Head; it follows then, as a necessary consequence, that he possesses the right to our submission, to the exclusion of all others.

"The fourth degree of initiation, consists in teaching the proselyte, that the prophets commis-

sioned to abrogate the religions which had preceded them, and to substitute others—the Chiefs of the different periods, and of successive revolutions—those by whom religious laws have been promulgated, are seven in number, the same as the Imams; that each of these had necessarily with him, another personage destined to receive his doctrines, to perpetuate it amongst the people, to serve him as his help and companion during his life, and to succeed him after his death. That this latter, in like manner, communicated and transmitted the doctrine to another, who stood in the same relative position to him as he had done towards the prophet from whom he received it, and so on, until seven persons of the same kind had succeeded each other in the same religion; that these seven personages were called the *Mutes*, because they adhered to a religion already existing, and in which they made no alteration, simply following in each other's steps. The first of the Mutes, the companion of the prophet, had the name of *Asas*, or foundation.

"When this succession of seven is completed, a new period commences, in which appears a pro-

phet, who abolishes the law of the prophet who preceded him and establishes a new one, and is again succeeded by seven *Mutes*. The process of instituting and abolishing religions goes on, until the appearance of the seventh prophet, who abrogates all the religions which had preceded him, and who is the chief of the last age—the last Natek. The following is their list:—

"The first of these speaking prophets, or Nateks, is Adam, whose companion and *Asas* was his son Seth; then follow the names of the seven mutes who professed to follow his law.

"The second prophet is Noah, who taught a new law, and abolished that of Adam. His *Asas* was his son Shem; and after him, in like manner, seven mutes.

"Abraham, the friend of God, is the third prophet, who abrogated the laws of Adam and Noah, and whose *Asas* was his son Ismael; but after the death of Ismael, he replaced him by another, and completed the establishment of his law. Again seven mutes.

"The fourth prophet is Moses, the son of Amram, whose *Asas* was, first, Aaron, and upon his death

Joshua, the son of Nun. John, the son of Zachariah, was the last of the mutes who followed the religion of Moses.

"The fifth prophet is the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary. He abolished all the laws which had preceded him, and had for his *Asas* Simon Cepha, succeeded by seven mutes professing the religion of the Messiah.

"The law of the Messiah subsisted until the appearance of the sixth prophet, Mohammed, son of Abdallah, who in like manner abrogated every thing established by his predecessors and established a new religion. His companion and *Asas* was Ali, the son of Abou Taleb; and the seven mutes through whom were transmitted the mysteries of his religion, are Hasan, the son of Ali, and his second son Hosein; Ali, son of Hosein; Mohammed, son of Ali; Djafar, son of Mohammed; and Ismael, son of Djafar Sadeek, who is the last of the mutes amongst the concealed Imams.

"The seventh prophet is the Chief, or 'the Master of the Age,' a name which these missionaries of the Ismaelis give to Mohammed, the son of Ismael. It is he who has constituted and

exposed the knowledge of the interior and mystical meaning. Everybody is bound to follow him, to submit to and obey him, in abandoning his conduct entirely to his directions, because, in so doing, one pursues the right path; whereas, in acting otherwise, one is sure to fall into error.

CHAPTER XVII.

"The missionary, in bringing his disciples to this point, has acquired a great step, for he has made him admit a prophetical mission after Mohammed, who is considered by all true Mussulmen as the seal of all the prophets; and the empire of his religion, according to their belief, is to endure until God himself takes possession of the earth and all that is in it. In renouncing, therefore, this dogma, the proselyte has fallen into apostacy without being aware of it. He is then led on to other degrees, in which he is treated with discursive and abstruse essays about the nature of the elements, and how they are mixed up and act upon each other, the virtues of the planets, the formation of the earth, the intrinsic value of numbers, certain principles of geometry for the know-

ledge of figures, and other doctrines borrowed from various philosophical sects.

" The missionary then proceeds to explain, that the obligations prescribed by the law of the Koran, have quite a different meaning from what is generally received; that the precept of prayer, of paying the tenth, of the pilgrimage, and various other religious observances, have an allegorical interpretation; that these practices are merely a means of keeping men in dependence, to prevent them by such occupations, from injuring each other and committing rapine and excess abroad.

" At the same time, he professes a profound veneration for the authors of these institutions, and approves the great degree of wisdom which has dictated them. The proselyte is in the next degree, instructed to make a distinction between the prophets, and the philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, and others. The excellence of the principles of the latter are highly extolled, and insinuations are thrown out against the institutors of legal observances; sarcastic sneers are indulged in against the Imams, and their conduct is ridiculed.

"He is assured that Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and all the other prophets, laid the basis of their systems on the lessons which they acquired in the study of the great masters of philosophy, and that they instituted their religions to conduct men to the knowledge of the same sublime truths. If the missionary wishes to initiate the proselyte into the deepest mysteries of his doctrines, he speaks to him thus: 'You concede that the author of a figurative law, the founder of a religion, cannot of himself suffice; that he must have a second under him to speak in his name, to the end that they may act in unison, the one being as it were derived from the other. If this process takes place in this lower world, it is only because the same thing occurs in the world above. From the beginning of the world there are two beings, who are the common principle of the economy of the universe, and by whom its harmony is preserved; the one is the most elevated, and instructs; the second receives, and is instructed.'"

Texts from the Koran are then adduced, to fortify this doctrine. This is a wily method of shaking the belief of the proselyte in the Unity of

the Godhead, by persuading him that the title of Creator, and the work of the creation, belong to two different beings. The one of these two beings is Pre-existent, the second is created by the first, exists by him, and could not exist without him, being formed of his proper substance. The Pre-existent formed all primitive substances, the second gave them shape, and made out of them compound substances. The Pre-existent has received his existence from a superior Being, in the same manner as the second has received his existence from the Pre-existent; with this difference, that he from whom the Pre-existent was derived, has neither name nor attribute, nor ought any to speak of Him, or presume to render Him any worship.

Hamzé, in exposing the opinions of the ancient doctors of the Batenians, with regard to the Pre-existent, and the Being from whom he was derived, calls the former the "Word." Moreover, in their system, the production of corporeal substances is not a real creation, but rather a disposition and conformation. After that, the missionaries explain to the proselyte what the Koran is, and what is meant by the name the "Word of God," in a

manner widely different from that in which they are understood, by those who accept the Koran as a revelation.

In the same way, he disposes of the doctrines of the resurrection, the end of the world, the final judgment, the distribution of rewards and punishments, making them to signify the revolutions of the stars and planets, which succeed each other periodically, the production and destruction of all things according to the disposition and combination of the elements, agreeably to principles laid down in the books of philosophy.

In conclusion, with regard to Mohammed, the son of Ismael, son of Djafar, they teach, in the first place, that he is to re-appear in the world; but afterwards they explain that his reappearance will be spiritual, in the hearts of his disciples, when they meditate deeply on his mystical doctrines; and that, as to his actual manifestation, that consists in the preaching of his faith, which is communicated to men by the organ of his faithful servants.

This system of instruction, and this plan of seduction, which is much more fully and minutely developed in the original, was arranged by the

great body of missionaries, before they separated to go into different countries, where they obtained more or less success, according to their efforts and their talents. The original doctrines underwent various changes and modifications in the process of time, and the sect became divided into different branches, after its propagation in Morocco, Egypt, and Syria.

The code of instructions to an Ismaelite missionary, which Nowairi has copied from Abou Hasan, will form a characteristic and appropriate conclusion to the preceding remarks. "If you have to do with a man who professes the doctrine of the Schiis, you will make yourself known as a zealous partizan of the same doctrine. The better to insinuate yourself into his mind, you will talk loudly of the injustice committed by the Mussulmen, towards Ali and his children, of the atrocious murder of Hosein, and of the captivity to which they reduced his daughter. Profess yourself to have no sympathy whatever with the Ommiades and the Abassides, and treat of various other subjects, in the manner most likely to captivate and please him; by this means the men of this sect will soon

be at your disposal, and you will be able to lead them whither you choose.

"If you have affairs with a Sabæan, make a long dissertation on the seventh number, and the various things which turn upon that number. If you have to do with a sectarian of Magism, remember that his opinions, at bottom, nearly resemble your own. Begin with him by the fourth degree of initiation. Insist on the excellence of fire, of light, and of the sun. Shew him all about the Pre-existent, for He it is whom the Magi recognise as Ahriman. His Following concealed, is according to their opinion, the good; and Darkness concealed, the bad principle. Of all people, the Magi and the Sabæans are those who are most nearly related to us, and whose doctrine approaches the nearest to ours, but for want of rightly understanding it, they have introduced several errors into it.

"If the man you wish to gain over is a Jew, commence engaging his attention by discoursing about the Messiah, that is to say, the Messiah of the Jews; teach him that it is the Mehdi, Mohammed the son of Ismael, who is the expected Messiah, that the knowledge of the Mehdi will procure him a release

from the observation of the duties imposed by the Law, and a dispensation from its onerous obligations, in the same way as he is commanded to repose on the sabbath. You will gain his heart in speaking badly of the Christians and Musslemen, and of their ridiculous accounts about Jesus, that he was not engendered, and had no father. Tell him with assurance, that Joseph was his real father, just as much as Mary was his mother. With these and other remarks you will soon have a proselyte.

"Towards the Christians, you will open a way by abusing Jews and Mussulmen, without distinction, by asserting that you acknowledge the truth of the Christian creed, giving at the same time, its true allegorical interpretation; reproach them for misunderstanding the Paraclete,* and assure them the Paraclete is yet to come, and that it is to him, in fact,

* The Mussulmen say that the Paraclete promised by our Saviour, was Mohammed. Hamzé declares himself to be the Paraclete. Amongst the Druse books are two, the first of which is entitled, "Letter addressed to Constantine;" and the second, "Letter to the Christians, containing the Essence of the Principles of Piety, and destroying the Dogmas of Polytheism." These two writings, addressed to the Christians, contain the Apostles' and the Nicene creed, and a great many passages out of the Gospels and the Liturgy, which the author, by means of allegorical explanations, applies to the doctrine of the Druses. It is an application of the instructions above given.

you are about to draw them. If a Dualist is brought to you, you are nearly sure of success. The first thing you must do with him, is to reject at once the dogma of the Unity of God, and to speak to him about the Pre-existent, and the "Following," how the one inherits from the other; as the subject is treated of in the sixth and eighth degree of our plan of initiation. Give him our ideas and instructions about the mixture of light and darkness, and all its consequences; and if after having felt your ground, you think you can trust him, let him into our whole secret.

"If you have to deal with a Sunni, speak with the greatest respect before him, of Abou Becr and Omar, exalt their merits, criticise without restraint Ali and his children, relate all the circumstances of their lives open to ridicule and reproach. Insinuate that Abou Becr and Omar were by no means strangers to the doctrines which you teach. By this means you will gain his confidence. But take care as you advance, to secure your position, by obtaining the most solemn promises and assurances on his part, of secrecy and fidelity; but even if you find him docile and open to impressions, do

not be in too great a hurry to disclose all your dogmas, lest they might shock and revolt his mind. Feel your way, and go on step by step. There are some of the Sunni you should be satisfied with bringing over to the party of the Schiis; get them, however, to acknowledge Mohammed, the son of Ismael, as Imam, and that he is still living, but go no further.

" Make a great display of disinterestedness, and profess the greatest contempt for money. Conduct yourself towards them with the utmost blandness, and show of modesty and diffidence. Impose on them the fifty prayers,* and recommend them to avoid lying, drinking, gaming, and other bad habits. Be very careful to give your orders in the softest and most affable manner. Do not press a man of this sort at all to renounce his former religion, but bewilder him with arguments drawn from the things which are counted by the number seven; subdue him by a multiplicity of prayers. Having once succeeded in bringing him to this condition, you may give orders to whomsoever you

* The fifty prayers are mentioned in the history of the Karmatians and Ansayrii.

please, to take the most precious articles from him, much more his money—he will offer no resistance; and if he should be seized with a fatal illness, *he will make you his heir*, and leave you everything he has, thinking that there is not in the world a better man, or one more worthy of his confidence.

"Another you may, perhaps, be justified in leading to a higher degree, and you may make known to him the abrogation of the law of Mohammed. You will say to such an one, that the seventh speaking prophet, is really the seal of all those who bore a mission from Heaven. That Mohammed is the chief of the sixth period, and that Ali was not an Imam. Approach this subject with great prudence and discretion, for it is pregnant with vital consequences; for this point once admitted, you may hope to introduce him to higher gradations of initiation, and you will be able to destroy that belief in the divine mission of the prophets, which he previously held. There are very few whom you can carry on further than this, and to whom you will be able to discover the whole of our doctrine, relating to the Koran, its author, and his laws.

"At all events, you must not hazard anything,

until you are convinced by long practice and intimate acquaintance, that they are worthy of your trust and confidence. Such a course will be of great use to you, with regard to those whom you have brought to this point, for the destroying of their belief in the books, which they have hitherto been accustomed to reverence as, Revelations. To a small number, whom you think capable of being introduced to the most advanced stages of instruction, you can declare that the "Kaim"* is dead, that he will return to the world spiritually, and that men will be united with him, by their union with spiritual figures,† that he will cause distinction to be made, by order of God, amongst his followers, and that he will take vengeance on the unbelievers, in favour of those who believe in the spiritual figures.‡ This will suit you admirably with regard to those whom you have succeeded in

* Mohammed, son of Ismael.

† The spiritual figures in the system of the Druses, and, without doubt, in that of the Ismaelis, are the true and veritable dogmas which unite themsclves to souls, and become as it were incarnate in them, when they receive instruction with docility, and believe.

‡ The separation between the good and the wicked, which is to take place on the day of judgment, will be made by an angel, called in the system of the Druses, "The Order of God."

making adopt such a doctrine, to destroy the dogma of the resurrection of spirits, and the rising of the dead from the graves, in which they have hitherto believed.

"After you have brought them thus far, you will lead them on to deny the existence of celestial beings, such as angels, and to renounce the belief of the creation of man on the earth, and to believe that there have been many other beings before man. To prove this, you will make use of arguments which may be found in the books of the doctors who have preceded us. You will find this point, once gained, of immense use to you in destroying the dogma of the existence of a God, and of the mission of angels towards the prophets, and in substituting for it the truth—that is, the Eternity of the world. Fail not to advance slowly, and little by little, in the different chapters of the nine degrees, until you have brought them, successively and insensibly, to the conclusion. Each chapter which you explain, will serve to confirm that which has preceded. Take care to preserve the greatest secrecy in all your conduct, as the Prophet of the Mussulmen has prescribed to his intimate confi-

dants. Have recourse to secrecy in all your proceedings.

"On no account reveal to a new proselyte that which you will reveal to one who is more advanced. Neglect nothing to conciliate respect, by affecting a grave demeanour and a severe life in the eyes of the vulgar, and cautiously avoid everything which may give rise to remark. Do not be too familiar even with the most perfect and most deeply initiated of your disciples, as many have done who have gone before you; for it has happened, that these persons after having laboured to complete the edifice, have finished by destroying their work.

"If you act on this plan, and if you tread exactly in this path, you will follow the same road that the prophets have pursued, and you will imitate their conduct. Nor is this all. It is necessary that you should practise yourself to acquire a great facility of legerdemain, so as to fascinate the eyes and the looks, by tricks and evolutions with cups and balls, *to obtain the reputation of being able to perform miracles*, as well as your predecessors. You must be perfectly conversant with the histories

of ancient legislators, their lives and adventures, their systems and their sects, so as to shape your discourses in the way which is most suitable to the men of your age.

"Thus, your efforts will be crowned with success, you will gain confidence, you will be entitled to the gratitude of your Imam, your name will be renowned. Those who will enter into our sect after your death, will be more numerous than those whom you converted during your life. The doctrine of the truth will be useful to you, and to your descendants. The party of the truth will gain the dominion. By your labours, by your ministry, and the ministry of your colleagues, men illustrious for their learning and intelligence, you will gain for yourselves, for those who come after you, and for your posterity, a far greater good than any one else knows how to acquire. These are the instructions I give you, which are applicable to all religions that the prophets have established, each prophet according to his knowledge and understanding."

But this system of craft and subtlety, so suitable to a rising sect, was accompanied by another mode

of proceeding, *should it become triumphant*, and be able to substitute force for persuasion; which will appear by the following extract from a book, quoted by the Shereef Abou Hasan, entitled the "Book of Politics." "Our illustrious Sheik has composed a work, of which this is but an abridgment, in which he gives orders to his missionaries, as to the manner in which they should conduct themselves towards the people of the different religions, and particularly towards the Mussulmen.

"*When you shall have obtained the advantage over them, draw the sword against them.* They are all our enemies; seize their goods, exterminate their women and children. Let no tie whatever induce you to spare them. Leave not one of their villages standing. Let no feeling of compassion touch you in favour of the partizans of Ali. If any of them had succeeded in founding an empire, like the other prophets, we should have had to suffer immensely at his hands; and by virtue of the rights which he would have pretended to have inherited, he would have exercised over us a far severer dominion, than even his predecessors. Take care, then, not to shut your eyes on such of the

descendants of Ali as you may find. Kill them when they fall into your hands. Let not any of those who depend on you, place the slightest confidence in them. By this means you will follow the right path, and merit reward. You will direct others, and will yourself be directed towards the good. Praise be to God in every condition, for the gifts he has given us, and for the favour which rests on his elect servants."

This systematic form of fraud and hypocrisy, this development of the most revolting principles, this plan of insurrection and revolt, rather than of religion, was the work, as has been already observed, of Abdallah the son of Maimoum, who flourished about the middle of the third century of the Hegira. It was under the government of his son Achmed, that this doctrine gave birth to the faction of the Karmatians, above mentioned, in Irak, which event happened in the year A.H. 274. They, and the modern Nosairis, who live in the mountains between Tripoli and Aleppo, are one and the same sect.

Hamzé, in a writing where he recounts the history of the beginnings of the sect of Ismaelis, in

the towns of Hadjar and Lahsa, recognises the Karmatians as true Unitarians, and expressly declares that Abou Said, Abou Taher, and many other Seids of the Karmatians, had been servants of the true God—of Hakem. Moktana, and other writers of the sect of the Druses, addressed a letter to the Seids of Lahsa, recalling to them the services which their ancestors had rendered to the cause of Unitarianism. This, however, may have been flattery, to bring them over to embrace their sect. Certainly Hamzé denounces the Nosairis in no measured terms.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Dynasty known as that of the Fatimites, or, as they were sometimes called, the Ismaelis, since they professed the doctrines of that sect, pretended to trace their origin to Ali, and consequently to Mohammed, through his daughter Fatima. The founder of their power in Africa was Obeidallah, surnamed the Mehdi. The Abassides did all in their power to prevent their rising influence, and waged against them incessant war. But the Fatimites finally succeeded in obtaining the ascendency, and took from their enemies, Africa, Egypt, Syria, Diarbecr, Mecca, and Medina, and Yemen. The dominion which they established on these successes, lasted for 270 years.

The Abassides, vanquished in their attempts to

subdue the Fatimites by force of arms, endeavoured to weaken the estimation in which they were held by the people, by circulating reports and fermenting suspicions, as to the legitimacy of their origin. At Bagdad, these statements, which certainly had some show of reason and truth, were publicly asserted, and received a kind of sanction from the Cadis, or law officers, who put their seals to a document, in the year 402 of the Hegira, setting forth that the Fatimites had nothing in common with the descendants of Ali.

The original name of Obeidallah was Said. He was the son of Achmed, to whom allusion was made in the preceding chapter, as living at Salamia, in Syria; and grandson of Abdallah, the famous author of the Ismaelite code of instruction. He was born at Salamia. Hamzé, speaking of the Mehdi, calls him, Said the son of Achmed; and Moktana, another Druse writer, acknowledges that the seventh of the interior religion, was Said, or Obeidallah, son of Achmed.

Having gathered together the immense riches which had been accumulated by his grandfather, he left Salamia, and determined to seek his for-

tunes in Egypt, giving himself out as a lineal descendant of Ali, son of Abou Taleb. There he presently attached to himself a considerable party, by means of bribes and largesses; but the government at Cairo becoming aware of his intrigues, and fortified by letters from Bagdad with reference to him, set on foot a vigorous search, and endeavoured to seize both him and his companions. Obeidallah fled in haste to Tripoli, on the coast of Barbary. An intimate friend and associate of his, named Abou Abdallah the Ketamite, of Koufa, had in the mean time made several incursions into Africa, with a large body of men from the direction of Mecca and Aden. Ziadet-allah, the king of Africa, alarmed at the progress of Abou Abdallah, and aware of his connexions with Obeidallah, who was in command of great resources, sent orders to the governor of Tripoli to seize him.

Obeidallah escaped to Segelmessa, but was soon overtaken, and thrown into prison. Nevertheless, Abou Abdallah had conquered Meila, Satif, and several other towns. Ziadet-allah assembled an army of 40,000 men, and gave the command of it to Ibrahim, son of Hanscheb, one of his near rela-

tions, but who was wholly ignorant of the art of war. Ibrahim took up his quarters in Constantina,* a very ancient and strong fortress. Abou Abdallah watched his motions from the neighbouring mountains of Ankidjar. Ibrahim remained shut up in Constantina six months, till at length, emboldened by the reserved conduct of Abou Abdallah, he marched out with all his forces, and took up a position near Kerma. A battle ensued, in which Ibrahim was completely routed. Ziadet-allah redoubled his exertions to save his throne, and in the spring of the following year, 276 of the Hegira, sent an army to take the field, when again meeting with a total and complete defeat, he fled into Egypt, and from thence to Bagdad.

Abou Abdallah pursued his career of conquest, and made himself master of all the principal towns of Africa. Finding himself solidly established, he hastened to release Obeidallah from prison. Advancing on Segelmessa, he took it by storm; and submitting his own to the far higher pretensions of the chief of his sect, he placed Obeidallah on a richly caparisoned charger, and,

* Now occupied by the French.

doing him homage in presence of all the people, paraded him through the town, preceded by a crier, who exclaimed—"Behold your master!" Obeid-allah only remained six days in Segelmessa, and then placing himself at the head of the forces, and accompanied by Abou Abdallah, as his second in command, he marched to Rakkada, from whence he sent for the treasures which had been left at Ankidjar.

The day after his arrival, he had himself proclaimed as Mehdi, the Prince of Believers. A public sitting was held, in which all the inhabitants were called upon to embrace his sect. The few who consented were richly rewarded. Of those who refused, some were thrown into prison, others were put to death. But the zeal which Abou Abdallah had hitherto displayed for the interests of Mehdi, soon gave place to jealousy. He endeavoured to raise a conspiracy amongst the principal officers of the army, going even so far as to say, that Obeidallah was not the Mehdi, as the Mehdi was to perform astonishing miracles. The treason was seasonably discovered, and Abou Abdallah was unscrupulously sentenced to death.

On the executioner approaching him, he craved for mercy; but the former replied,—"The master, whom you told us to obey, has ordered me to slay you." This happened in the year A.H. 298.

The murder of Abou Abdallah occasioned a revolt; but Mehdi mounted his horse, rode out amidst the people and the troops, and proclaiming a general amnesty, reduced everything to order. This prince succeeded in establishing himself on the throne of Africa, and died in the year 322. His son and successor was Kaim-biamr-Allah, Abou 'l Kasem Mohammed, born at Salamia, in the year 280, and who had borne in the East the name of Abdalrakman. This prince died A.H. 334, and was succeeded by his son, Mansour-bi-nasr-Allah, Abou 'l Taher Ismael. Mansour died A.H. 341, and the throne passed to his son, Moëzz-lideen-Allah, Abou Temeem Maadd. It was he who conquered Egypt, and who enlarged and embellished the town of Cairo, where he took up his residence. He died A.H. 365. His son, Azeez-billah, Abou Mansour Nezar, succeeded him. On his death, which took place A.H. 386, the throne was ascended by Hakem-biamar Allah, Abou Ali Mansour, his son, whose

name, career, and mysterious disappearance, is so intimately connected with the history of the Druses.

Hakem-biamar Allah, was born in the palace of Cairo, in the year of the Hegira 375, being the first of the princes of the Fatimite dynasty, who was born in Egypt. He was proclaimed Caliph in the year 386. His first act was to appoint a minister, called Waseeta, or Mediator, whose office was to draw up and authenticate all documents of state. This important place was given to Abou Mahommed Hassan, the Ketamite, but whose familiar name was Ibn Ammar. This man was very powerful, having at his call the whole of the Ketamite forces in Africa, to whom, as has been shown, the Fatimites owed their first successes.

Hakem, who was barely twelve years of age, always remained in his palace, under the care of his tutor, Bardjewan. This latter, jealous of the ascendency of Ammar, exercised his influence with Hakem, to get him dismissed from his office, which event took place in the year 387, and a short time afterwards he was put to death. Bardjewan having gained his end, got himself appointed to

the vacant post; and after having paraded Hakem in a grand procession before the people, placed him on a golden throne, and had him solemnly acknowledged as Caliph. The newly-installed favourite exercised all the functions of government, with an air of sovereign authority.

The young Sultan was not yet of an age to be much offended by such presumption. What annoyed him was, that Bardjewan would not allow him to take rides of pleasure, and thwarted his desire of making lavish presents to his boyish companions. Reidan, an eunuch, his parasol-bearer, and to whom he was greatly attached, offered to kill him. Hakem consented; and one day, accordingly, as they were all walking out together in the garden of Lonlona, Reidan stabbed Bardjewan in the back, and the other slaves cut off his head. Hamzé, in one of his writings, adduces the fearlessness with which Hakem, at so young an age, committed these acts, as a proof of his Divinity.

When in his seventeenth year, Hakem began to take a very active part in public affairs, and to show himself frequently to the people. Every

night he went out on horseback, surrounded by a numerous suite. The inhabitants of Cairo used to rival each other, in the extent and brilliancy of their illuminations. Bands of music, and parties of pleasure were to be seen in every quarter; but the women were strictly prohibited from appearing. In the year 393, Hakem commenced the building of the Mosque of Raschida,* and completed the grand Mosque of Cairo, which is outside the Gate of Victory, and which had been begun by his father, Azeez. He also publicly gave his adhesion to the sect of the Schiis, while the Sunni were treated with the greatest rigour.

The offices of secretaries and underwriters to the different divans had long been filled by Christians, who at that period, even as they are now, were distinguished by a degree of intelligence and capacity far superior to the Mussulmen. But it seems they had presumed on their position, and treated the Mussulmen with contempt. Hakem's indignation was aroused, and he commenced a severe persecution against them, beginning with the

* A long piece of the Druses is devoted to a description of the Mosque of Raschida.

patriarch Isa, who was cruelly tormented, and put to death. The Jews also were subjected to the most degrading penalties.

The year A.H. 395 is a memorable epoch in the life of Hakem. It was in this year, that the fantastical humour of his character appeared, in a number of ordinances, not less ridiculous in themselves than they were oppressive to his subjects of all religions. Large pieces of parchment, containing anathemas written in letters of gold, against Ayescha, the wife of the Prophet, Abou Becr, Omar, and Othman, were stuck up on the outside and inside of all the mosques. The making and sale of beer was prohibited, because it was a liquor which Ali, the son of Abou Taleb held in great aversion. Criers, with bells, read a proclamation through all the streets, warning persons of both sexes against entering the baths without drawers; forbidding the women to appear without having their faces closely veiled; and the fishmongers to sell fish that had no scales.

The Christians were compelled to wear blue coloured garments, with black turbans, and to carry crosses a foot long suspended from their necks.

The Jews were ordered to wear yellow garments, and to attach to their necks round blocks of wood, to resemble the head of the Calf which they worshipped in the wilderness. The people, terrified at this demonstration, hastened to give their adhesion to the sect of their sovereign, and Hakem appointed two days in the week to receive the applicants for admission and initiation,—Sunday for the men, and Wednesday for the women.

Such was his zeal for proselytism, that he opened a college in Cairo, expressly for the purpose of teaching the doctrines of the Batenians. The public were admitted gratis. A large library was formed. Readers were appointed to explain the Koran. Jurisconsults, astronomers, grammarians, professors of Arabic, medical men, had their respective places of lecture, and were handsomely salaried. Every article necessary for study, such as paper, ink, pens, &c., were liberally supplied. Such a thing had never been seen or heard of before. At the same time, the most rigorous measures of police were taken. Nobody was allowed to appear after sunset. Every utensil for holding wine was broken. The wine flowed

in the streets. A dog having frightened Hakem's horse when he was out riding, every dog in Cairo was shot.

About this time, the year A.H. 395, Hakem began constructing an immense magazine, which he filled with reeds, and bulrushes, and acacia wood. There being no ostensible reason for this procedure, the greatest consternation seized all the public *employés*, the secretaries, and writers of the different divans. They fancied it was to be made a bonfire, in which they were to be burnt. It appears they had incurred the displeasure of Hakem, for they went to his palace in a body, demanding mercy and forgiveness. Their demands were acceded to, and the following morning a general amnesty was published for all offenders. He could not bear the grooms and valets, and a great number of them were put to death.

The following year, Hakem's attention was diverted from the pursuit of these, and other internal measures and regulations, by the revolt of the Beni Korra, in the province of Barka, aroused to rebellion by the tyrannous and vexatious tributes, imposed on them by the Sultan. Many

of their chiefs had been brought to Cairo and executed. An active and daring fanatic, of the name of Walid Abou Racwa, who also had private griefs against Hakem, induced them to espouse his cause, by offering to lead them on to battle. The Beni Korra and the Beni Zenata acknowledged him as their Imam. Success attended their arms.

The armies of Hakem were successively defeated. At length, he sent for reinforcements from Syria, and, when these had arrived, together with an auxiliary force of Arab tribes, he sent them to take the field under Fadal, son of Abdallah. The vigilance of this general, had hardly discovered and frustrated a treasonable correspondence between the Arabs of his own army and the Beni Korra, in which the latter had succeeded in inducing them to desert the interests of Hakem; when Abou Racwa, by an extraordinary march, in which he performed, in two nights, a passage of five days, fell upon one of the principal detachments of the Egyptian army, by surprise, at Gizeh, and totally dispersed it. The greatest alarm prevailed at Cairo, and it is said that Hakem retired

to Bilbeis,* with all his portable treasures. Fadal, however, lost no time in repairing the disaster, and, advancing against his enemy, attacked him in the province of Fayoom, where Abou Racwa had taken up his quarters.

Here a battle took place which changed the face of affairs. The latter was defeated. The Beni Korra refused any longer to support him, and he fled to Nubia. Hakem sent an embassy to demand him. The King of Nubia delivered him up, and, after a mock entry into Cairo, being preceded by fifteen elephants magnificently caparisoned, and having endured the coarsest ribaldry of the mob, he was decapitated on a slight eminence, in front of the Mosque of Reidan. For some time after his escape from this danger, which had nearly cost him his throne, Hakem displayed moderation. In all the Mosques, an ordinance was read, according entire liberty of conscience to all the various sects of Mussulmen, and the obnoxious decrees against the enemies of Ali were taken down. Several onerous imposts were likewise abolished.

* Hamzé denies this, and, on the contrary, makes the conduct of Hakem, in this dangerous emergency, a matter of the greatest eulogy.

In the year A.H. 400, a dispute between a monk of the name of Jean, and the Patriarch Zachariah, gave Hakem an occasion for enriching himself at the expense of the Christians. It seems that the latter had refused to consecrate Jean a bishop, upon which he bore his complaint to Hakem. Presenting his petition, he said to him—"You are the Vicar of God on earth, for God's sake espouse my cause!" The Sultan read the paper, which contained a passage to the following effect:—"You are the king of the country, but the Christians have a king far more powerful than you, owing to the immense riches which he has amassed. He sells bishoprics for money, and conducts himself in a manner odious before God." Hakem immediately sent for the Patriarch, and threw him into prison.

The monk, betraying a secret of his sect, had reported to the Sultan, that the Greek clergy, on Easter day, used to make an artificial flame in the body of the Sepulchre, and call it, the Descent of Fire from heaven; that to effect this, they oiled the chain on which the great central lamp was suspended; while, on a given signal, a priest applied a light to the highest extremity of the chain,

which, running down and communicating with the wick, set it in a blaze; upon which all the assembled Christians burst out into cries of "Kyrie Eleison," and had their faith confirmed by this extraordinary miracle.* Hakem's indignation at this blasphemy was extreme. He immediately issued an order to the governor of Jerusalem, to destroy the Church of the Resurrection.

Throughout all the provinces of the empire, the Christian churches and monasteries were pulled down, and all the vessels and ornaments of gold and silver which they contained, collected and sent to the palace of Cairo. All transactions of buying and selling with the Christians, were made criminal. Many of them apostatized. Numerous applications were made to Hakem, for grants of the lands belonging to the monasteries, which were readily conceded. This persecution continued for several years; and an author worthy of credit has recorded, that by the end of the year A.H. 405, nearly 500 churches and monasteries had been demolished.

It was in this year, that Hakem began to exhibit the greatest signs of devotion in public. He would

* Even at the present day, this disgraceful imposition is carried on by the Greek clergy.

wear a turban of delicate white muslin on his head, a coarse black woollen garment over his shoulders, and ride to the mosque on a donkey, strictly prohibiting all the people from kissing the ground before him, or calling him "Lord and Master."* Astrologers and musicians of every kind were banished the country. Sums of money were appropriated for the support of strangers, and of the poor who sought shelter in the mosques, which he filled with scents and perfumes of the most costly description, night and day. Women were not allowed to appear outside their houses, or ever to be seen looking out at the windows, or walking on the terraces; and in order that this mandate should be effectual, the shoemakers were forbidden to make shoes for them.

One day, passing through the bazaars, he heard

* The Druses thus allude to his conduct at this time, in one of their books:—"Our Lord before his disappearance wore black garments during seven years; he let his hair grow long for seven years; he kept all the women shut up in their houses for seven years; he rode upon a donkey for seven years. And this he did out of his great pity and compassion for us, in order to conform himself to what we had always been accustomed, that is to say, to the number Seven, which is of so much importance in the system of the Ismaelis. He wore black garments more particularly, as typical of his disappearance, and to signify to his faithful friends and servants, that for seven years after that event, they would be in a state of trial and darkness."

a noise in one of the baths, and on inquiry, found that there were women in it. He instantly stopped, sent for the masons, and walling up all the doors and windows, left them to perish of starvation. His measures of police, with regard to the women, became after this more stringent than ever. Old women were employed as spies, who, going amongst the harems both of the great and little, used to find out if any of their inmates contrived to get out. Reports of the names of the defaulters were sent in, when a eunuch and soldiers were sent to the houses to which they belonged, and presented them with invitations to the palace. Not knowing the nature of their errand, they went rather flattered than otherwise. When a certain number had assembled, Hakem had them all sown up in bags, and thrown into the Nile.

The town of Aleppo, in the year A.H. 404, recognised Hakem as its sovereign. In the same year, he allowed all the Jews and Christians who would not submit to his regulations, to retire into Greece, which many of them did.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was in the year A.H. 407, that the adventure of Mahommed the son of Ismael, Darazi, occurred in Cairo. This man was a Persian, and a missionary of the sect of Batenians. He had become a disciple of Hamzé, and entering into the service of Hakem, he undertook to support that monarch's claims to the Divinity. He wrote a book, in which he set forth, that the soul of Adam had passed into Ali, son of Abou Taleb; that the soul of Ali had passed into the ancestors of Hakem, and was at present in that prince. Hakem made him his chief vizier, and gave him the management of affairs. The other viziers and pashas were obliged to make their court to him, and no act or decision was obtained from the Sultan, except through his medium.

Hakem did this, on purpose that they might get into the habit of looking up to, and implicitly obeying Darazi. Whether authorized by Hakem to make the attempt, or moved by his own zeal and ambition to please his master, he one day stood up in the grand mosque, and began to read out his book aloud. He was instantly mobbed, and would have been killed on the spot, had he not contrived to make his escape. How he was privately sent out of Egypt into Syria, with what intent and with what results, has been described in a preceding chapter.* It is probable that Hakem had promoted him, in the hopes that his more daring and unscrupulous character, would lead him to assert his Divinity, with greater openness and vigour.

The attempt above alluded to having failed, Hakem lavished all his fondness and attentions on Hamzé, who remained in Cairo, surrounded by twelve disciples, constantly endeavouring to extend his sect, and gain adherents to the belief in Hakem's Divinity. In the year 408, Hakem determined, if possible, to prepare the minds of his subjects, by degrees, for the acceptance of this tenet.

The Druse books inform us, that he suppressed

* See chapter xi., page 232.

the pilgrimage to Mecca. The annual gift to the Caaba, of a cloth mantle, was discontinued. He himself ceased going to the mosque, gave up the practise of the five prayers, wholly disregarded the two feasts, at the commencement and the close of Ramadan, and even infringed that solemn fast itself. He also suppressed the payment of the tenth, and other offerings prescribed by the Mohammedan law. In the year 408, which is called by the Druses, the first year of the appearance of Hamzé, Hakem granted an universal toleration to all sects and religions. Since before God, there is no distinction of persons, he considered it inconsistent with his Divinity, to patronize one creed more than another. The Christians had full permission to rebuild their churches. The marks of degradation to which they had been subjected, were removed.

A firman was issued, ordering restoration to the Christians, of all the marble pillars, stones, wood, and other articles, of which they had been robbed and deprived, during the seven preceding years of persecution. The properties belonging to the convents were given back. Free leave was given

to the Christians who had embraced Islamism, during that period of slavery and oppression, to renounce a religion to which they had been forced. In one week, six thousand Christians who had apostatized, returned to their faith.

Hakem now began to act in such a manner, as he thought most likely to convince the people of his Divinity. He pretended to Omniscience. Spies were sent to watch every part of the town, day and night. The old women whom he employed, brought hourly reports of all that passed in the interior of the harems, even to the minutest particulars of domestic life. In the morning, when the officers of state and those of his household assembled, he related to them various things which had taken place in different houses, at different hours, and the conversations which certain individuals had held. They were struck with astonishment and surprise, and many of them at length began to believe, that he really knew men's thoughts and actions.

Whenever the name of the Caliph was mentioned in the public places, the people used to bow down to the earth. At times a Jew, or a Christian, who had apostatized, meeting him, would say,

"My God! I wish I could return to my former religion;" upon which Hakem would reply, "Be it so, go in peace." Once he exclaimed, "The Nile is mine, I made it." Those who sought audiences of him, were obliged to say, on entering his presence: "Hail thou One and only One, who givest life and death, who bestowest riches and poverty." Nothing pleased him more than this salutation. One of his adulators having entered the place of prayer at Mecca, struck the black stone which is there with his spear, and cried out: "Oh fools! why do you bow down to and kiss that which can neither benefit nor injure you, while you neglect him who is in Egypt, who holds the issues of life and death in his hands?"

Hakem's favourite employment was making patrols in person, day and night, throughout all the public roads and by-ways of Cairo, sometimes in disguise, sometimes with the ensigns of sovereignty. On the latter occasions, he would familiarly receive, and examine on the spot, such petitions as might be presented to him. His enemies availed themselves sometimes of such opportunities, by night, to insult him. One of them would slip a

paper into his hand, and taking advantage of the obscurity, would as suddenly vanish. On being opened, it would be found to contain some insults and sarcasms against himself and his ancestors, or against his seraglio.

The women, enraged against him for the severe manner in which he kept them shut up and secluded, once caused the figure of a woman, made in wood, holding a petition in her hand, and covered with a white sheet, to be placed in one of the bazaars through which the Sultan was known to pass. The deception succeeded, and Hakem, on seeing it at a distance, ordered his guards to cut her down. The paper, on being examined, was found to contain offensive allusions to the conduct of his sister, Sitt Almoulc. On the trick being discovered, he became furious.

Returning to his palace, he called together his council, and the chief officers of his army, and gave the latter, orders to surround Cairo, set fire to it, pillage it, and massacre all its inhabitants who shewed any resistance. The African troops and his own corps of slaves, proceeded to execute his orders with the greatest alacrity. The inhabitants

endeavoured to defend themselves, but in vain. The fire gained ground on all sides, and the work of pillage and massacre went on for three entire days. Hakem, in the meantime, went daily to the heights of Karafa, from whence he could have a good view of the fighting, and hear the cries of the combatants. Coolly pretending not to know what was happening, he asked the standers-by what was the cause of these disturbances, and on being told that the troops and slaves were sacking the town, he exclaimed, "The curse of God be on them! who gave them orders to do so?"

On the fourth day, the Sheiks of Islam assembled in the different mosques with uplifted Korans in their hands, uttering piercing cries, and imploring the help of Heaven. The Turkish soldiers of the army were moved with compassion, and fraternized with the inhabitants; moreover, the greatest portion of them had friends and relations amongst the population of Cairo. They sent at the same time, some of their comrades to Hakem, and implored him, saying: "We are your servants and slaves, this city is yours; our wives and children, and all that we possess are within it. We are

ignorant what crime its inhabitants have committed, to merit such treatment. If you have a motive for these measures, deign to inform us, and give us time to withdraw our families and our goods: if on the contrary, the slaves are acting without your orders, give us permission to treat them as rebels and brigands."

Hakem replied, that what was doing was against his will, cursed the authors of the outrages, and gave the Turks full leave to undertake the defence of the inhabitants. At the same time, he sent secret messengers to the slaves, telling them to hold firm, and supplied them with fresh arms; his object in so doing, was to revenge himself on the Turks for their interference. But the Turks soon discovered his duplicity, and sent to him again, to say, that whatever happened they could not abandon the Mussulmen to slaughter; and that if he did not look to it, they would themselves set the whole town on fire, not sparing even the palace and the mosques.

Hakem, on receiving this message, immediately descended on his donkey to the scene of conflict, and ordered his men to retire. He then assembled the

principal persons of Cairo and the chiefs of the Turks, made a thousand excuses and apologies, and protested with an oath, that he was in no ways accessory to what had happened. They kissed the ground before him, humbly thanked him, and prayed for a general amnesty for all the inhabitants of Cairo. Hakem granted their request, and an ordinance to that effect, was read in all the mosques and bazaars.

Thus, tranquillity was restored. The shops were reopened, and each one resumed his occupation. One-third of the town, however, had been destroyed by the fire, and half of it had been pillaged. The inhabitants made search in every direction, for such of their wives and daughters as had been made prisoners, and ransomed them with large sums of money from Hakem's slaves and soldiers, after those savages had dishonoured them.

Some of the Shereefs, or nobles, sent to Hakem and demanded of him an order, for the restoration of their daughters. He replied, "Go and pay the ransom required for them, and I will refund you." One of them, upon this, could contain himself no longer, but burst out into the bitterest invectives,

reproached him for his barbarity, and for the callous indifference he displayed towards those who were allied to him by ties of blood, and prayed that God might let a similar dishonour alight on the members of his family. Hakem gave him a smiling answer, and dismissed him.

It is probable, in his cooler moments, the Sultan began to repent of the infatuated fury, which had induced him to become the instigator of such scenes. At all events, his sister, Sitt Almoulc became an object of his hatred and suspicion. He reproached her violently, as being the cause of the insults he was daily receiving, and accused her of allowing men to be introduced into her harem. A report reached her one day, that her brother had formed a commission of medical men, and was about to send them to her on a very delicate errand. She took her measures with the greatest secrecy and promptness.

Sending for one of the principal Emirs of the Ketamites, called Ibn Dawas, who himself had been menaced with death by Hakem, she represented to him the danger which menaced them mutually, and the extravagant folly and impiety of her

brother, in wishing to pass himself off as God, which was enough to excite a general revolt against him. She showed him, that they would both inevitably be involved in his ruin, and that the only way to prevent such a disaster, was to make away with him, and put his son on the throne. The Emir consented to everything, and only demanded two trusty men to act as assassins.

Hakem was in the habit of riding out, at all hours, on his donkey. One morning, in the year 411, he rose before day-break, and took the direction of Karafa, his favourite resort, accompanied by two attendants. He believed in his horoscope, and on leaving his palace, signified to his mother, whom he tenderly embraced, that he should that day run a great risk, but that if he escaped, the stars promised him a life of eighty years. Reaching the mount of Karafa, he drew up, and looked intently for some moments on the starry firmament. "We all belong to God," he said, "and we shall all return to him." Suddenly striking his hands together he exclaimed, "Thou hast appeared then, fatal sign!" After a pause he moved on. Here history drops the veil. Some accounts state that

he was slain, others that he fled to a distant country. It is certain, he never went back to Cairo.

Severus of Oschomenus says, that his donkey was found in the fields hamstrung, and that all search for its master was fruitless. Gregory Bar-Hebræus affirms, that numbers thought Hakem had retired into the desert of Scété, where he ended his days as a monk. "I myself," says he, "when I lived at Damascus, have heard the Copt writers declare, that Jesus Christ had appeared to Hakem in the same way he did to St. Paul; that Hakem was converted, and went straight to the desert." For many years, the people believed that he was still living.

The Druses to this hour expect his return. The eccentricity which this monarch displayed, and the actions he is said to have committed, during a reign of twenty-five years, seem almost fabulous. It is with difficulty, one can be brought to believe that his subjects could have submitted so long, to such outrages on human nature. But the indubitable testimony of history confirms the melancholy fact, that there are times when men, as it

were contagiously, submit to, and even court, degradation and slavery.

For many months, he would have his palace lighted up night and day. Again, he would remain for months in utter darkness. One of his favourite amusements, was to write little notes addressed to certain Emirs, seal them up, and throw them out of his windows into the street. The passers-by picked them up, and carried them to their address. On being opened, they were found sometimes to contain an order to give the bearer a sum of money, and sometimes to give him a sound bastinado. He once made a proclamation, that all business of every kind was to be transacted during the night, and that nobody should do anything whatever during the day.

Making his rounds to see that his orders were executed, he discovered some roasters of meat pursuing their avocation. They were seized by his orders, and thrown into the ovens which they had heated. At another time, he ordered that no transactions were to be carried on after sunset, and ordered that all the shops should be closed at that hour. Finding a man frying meat a little after

dark, he ordered his hands to be cut off and flung into his frying-pan. The man exclaimed, "When did the Prince of the Faithful learn how to fry? We all know he is a roaster, (alluding to the fate of the meat-baker) but we did not know he was a frier." The man's witticism saved him. Hakem laughed, and let him go.

The terror he inspired, however, restrained evil-doers. He issued an order, that the doors of all shops and houses should be left open at night, and promised to indemnify all who should lose anything. In one night, four hundred different articles of value disappeared. The proprietors came and complained to Hakem. He ordered a statue which he had made, called the Sphynx, to be brought before him, and placing each complainant successively before it, told him to inform the Sphynx of his loss. A man concealed inside the statue, informed him who was the thief, and where the lost goods were concealed. Search was made accordingly; and the result proved the correctness of the information. The goods were restored to the proprietors, and the men on whom the property was found, were hung. Hakem had

employed these unfortunate men to commit the thefts, and then sacrificed them to the hangman, that all the world might have an idea of his justice, and of his acuteness in finding out the delinquents.

Such was the fear and dread inspired by this proceeding, that thieving was never afterwards known in Cairo. A piece of money might be dropped in the street, and nobody would touch it, remaining there until its owner came and picked it up.

A certain merchant left a sack, containing one thousand pieces of gold, in the care of a friend, and then departed on his journey. On his return, he went to his friend and claimed his money, which the latter denied having ever received. The merchant went and stated the circumstances to Hakem. "Stand in the bazaar to-morrow," said the Sultan, "and when I pass by, enter into earnest conversation with me, and I will pretend to listen to you with the greatest attention."

The appointment was punctually kept. The faithless trustee, seeing his friend speak with so much familiarity to Hakem, became greatly alarmed,

and immediately restored the bag to its owner. The merchant informed Hakem of the happy result of his measure. On the following day, the unfortunate trustee was found hung up to his own door, to the great astonishment of all the people, who neither knew the when, nor the wherefore.

In one of his lonely night promenades, Hakem was met by ten armed men, who demanded money from him. "Divide yourselves into two parties," said he, "and fight with each other; whichever side beats, shall have a handsome reward." They did so; and fought so desperately, that nine were killed. Hakem flung a handful of gold to the survivor; but, while he was picking up the treasure, one of his valets rushed upon him and slew him. The Sultan pocketed his money, and walked off.

He constructed in his palace a large reservoir, which was filled with water by means of hydraulic machines. The reservoir was surrounded by a pavement of different coloured marble, on which were represented birds and flowers, and having the appearance of a carpet. From out of the nearest wall, at a great height, projected a very

slender piece of wood, the end of which was exactly over the edge of the reservoir. He promised 600 pieces of silver to whoever would walk along this beam, and jump into the water. The hope of this recompense used to induce some, who were brought into the palace secretly, to make the experiment. Just as they arrived at the extremity of the beam, it broke, when they fell headlong on the pavement, and were killed.

He cared so little about committing a murder, that he one day descended from his donkey opposite the great mosque, knocked down one of his valets, and, stretching him on the ground, ripped up his belly with his own hand. When he ordered any one to be put to death, he obliged the family of the deceased to pass the night over the corpse.

His aspect was as terrible as a lion; his eyes were full, and of a light brown; no one could stand his look; his voice was strong and sonorous. Inconstancy and caprice, joined to cruelty; impiety united to superstition, formed his general character. It is said that he adored, in a special manner, the planet Saturn. Thousands of his subjects fell victims to his ferocity. In the opinion of the

Druses, as has been remarked, his various acts of tyranny, persecution, and oppression, do not militate against his Divinity. Let the Christian world pause, before it ridicules exclusively such monstrous inconsistency. Was not Alexander Borgia acknowledged as the head of the Church of Christ? the Vicar of God on earth?

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

TRANSLATION OF THE FIRMAN OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY SULTAN ABDUL MEDJID,

Granted in favour of His Protestant Subjects.

Most honoured Vizier, illustrious Counsellor, Maintainer of the good order of the world, Director of Public Affairs with wisdom and judgment, Accomplisher of the important Transactions of Mankind with intelligence and good sense, Consolidator of the Edifice of Empire and of Glory, endowed by the Most High with abundant gifts, and Moushir, at this time, of my gate of felicity, my Vizier Mehmed Pasha, may God be pleased to preserve him long in exalted dignity.

Let it be known, on receipt of this my noble Rescript, that,

WHEREAS, those of my Christian subjects who have embraced the Protestant faith, have suffered inconveniences and difficulties, in consequence of their not having been

hitherto placed under a separate and special jurisdiction, and in consequence of the Patriarchs and Primates of their old creeds, which they have abandoned, not being naturally able to administer their affairs.

Whereas, in necessary accordance with my Imperial solicitude and benevolence towards all classes of my subjects, it is contrary to my Imperial pleasure that any class of them should be exposed to trouble. And whereas, by reason of their faith, the aforesaid Protestants form a separate community. It is in consequence my Royal pleasure, that measures be taken for the sole purpose of facilitating the administration of their affairs, so that they may live in peace, quiet, and security. Let then a respectable and trustworthy person, chosen by themselves from among their own number, be appointed with the title of "Agent of the Protestants," to be attached to the Department of the Minister of Police. It shall be the duty of the Agent to take charge of the Register of the Members of the Community, and which is to be kept at the Police Department. The Agent is to register therein all births and deaths. All applications for passports and marriage licences, and on those special affairs of the Community which are to come before the Sublime Porte, or any other Department, are to be made under the official seal of the Agent. The present Royal and August Edict has been especially granted and issued from my Imperial Chancery, for carrying my pleasure into execution. Hence, Thou the above indicated Moushir, shalt carry the preceding Ordinance into scrupulous execution, conformably with the explanations given. As, however, the assessment of taxes and the delivery of passports are subject to specific regulations; thou shalt not permit anything to be done in contravention thereto. Thou shalt not

suffer any tax or haratch to be required of the Protestants, for marriage licences or for registration. Thou shalt be careful that, like unto the other Communities of the Empire, every facility and required assistance be afforded to them in all their affairs, and in all matters concerning their cemeteries and places of worship. Thou shalt not permit any interference whatsoever, on the part of any other Community, with their rites or with their religious concerns, nor, in short, with any of their affairs, either secular or religious, in any manner whatsoever; in order that they may be enabled to exercise the usages of their faith in security. Thou shalt not suffer them to be molested one iota in these or in any other matters; and thou shalt be careful and attentive to maintain them in the desired quiet and security. They are to be permitted to make those representations to the Sublime Porte which it may be necessary to make concerning their affairs, through their agent. After thou hast taken due cognizance of these matters, thou shalt cause the present Noble Rescript to be registered in the proper quarter, and shalt cause it to be confirmed in the possession of the aforesaid subjects, and thou shalt be careful that the high provisions thereof be always carried into due execution. Thus be it known unto thee, giving full credence to the Imperial signet. Done in the second decade of the sacred month of Moharrem, in the year of the Hegira 1264, at Constantinople the well-guarded.

(*Sultan's Signature.*)

No. 2.

LETTER FROM THE GRAND VIZIER TO MEHEMET PACHA, GOVERNOR OF SIDON, DATED 6TH APRIL, 1852.

The certain information has reached us, that some Catholics living at Nazareth have attacked two Protestant clergymen, and that the latter were unable to resist the attack, or to restore and maintain peace and tranquillity in that village, because the governor had not a single agent of police at hand.

Now, His Imperial Majesty is desirous that all classes of his subjects who live under the shadow of his protection, should enjoy, in every respect, the most complete personal security, and be fully defended. Therefore, your Excellence will verify the facts, will forthwith establish in the above-named village a police force sufficient to assure the repose and tranquillity of its inhabitants; and will take immediate steps to seek out, arrest, and punish the individuals who have dared to commit the outrage to which we have just alluded, in order to inspire terror into like persons; and it is to this end that we have addressed this present letter to your Excellency.

16, *Djmazinl Akher*, 1268.

(Signed) Mustapha Reshid.

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